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Having had opportunity to observe the achievements of three generations, I have written this work as a small contribution to the history of the Industrial, Commercial and Political progress in our great Commonwealth, the Keystone State of the Union.

A handwritten signature in cursive ink, appearing to read "A. W. Johnson", is written over a single horizontal line.





*James Buchanan*



# Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania

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A Connected and Chronological Record of the Commercial, Industrial and Educational Advancement of Pennsylvania, and the Inner History of all Political Movements since the adoption of the Constitution of 1838. . . . .

BY

A. K. McClure, LL.D.

Illustrated with Portraits of over one hundred distinguished men of Pennsylvania, including all the Governors, Senators, Judges of the Courts of to-day, leading Statesmen, Railroad Presidents, Business Men and others of note.

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VOLUME I

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A faint, light blue sketch of a landscape with a large tree and a path.

Alexander K. McOlins



## INTRODUCTION

PENNSYLVANIA has ever been in the forefront of her sister States in field and forum, and in industrial and educational advancement; but while every era of progress is portrayed in our literature, it is fragmentary and so widely scattered in the records of Pennsylvania achievement that it is an appalling task for any student of to-day to undertake the mastery of the varied movements which have culminated in making our Commonwealth foremost in progressive development. Our people to-day look at their great empire, by courtesy called a State, and see the grandest railway system of the world created by our authority and energetic people, with another great railway system that introduced anthracite coal to the homes and shops of the city, that is now one of the great railway organizations of the country, and tributary railways extending into every center of industry to develop the wondrous wealth of the State. They see the most advanced and liberal educational system of the world maintained by their Commonwealth, offering free education to the humblest child of every community. They see great corporate interests reaching into every channel of industrial development adding millions upon millions to the wealth of the people, but only a very few have any conception of the long, earnest and often desperate struggles made by brave, progressive men in early years to remove the barriers of ignorance and prejudice which steadily and vindictively resisted every effort for educational and industrial development.



The author of these chapters has had more than a half century of experience in political struggles of the State, in which were involved every phase of commercial, industrial and educational advancement, and his personal acquaintance with the leading political factors whose public service was rendered before his participation in political affairs enables him to present, in connected chronological order, the commercial, industrial and educational advancement since the adoption of the amended Constitution of 1838, and to give also, not only the story of the political struggles which advanced or retarded the advancement of the Commonwealth, but the inner history of the political movements of the times and the desperate conflicts created by the interests of individual ambition and often conflicting industrial, educational and commercial policies. This period covers the heroic decade of Pennsylvania and of the Nation, when Civil War called for countless sacrifices of life and treasure to maintain the unity of the Republic, and in that struggle Pennsylvania, although second in population, furnished more soldiers to the war than any other State of the Union, suffered in war's spoliation, and on her hills at Gettysburg was fought the decisive battle between the blue and the gray that proclaimed to the world that "government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

The author was, for nearly half a century, actively engaged in the political struggles of the day, and aroused the full measure of antagonism that aggressive men ever must expect. He is thus called upon in these chapters to write much of men with whom he was not in political accord, and with some of whom he was in aggressive, factional or partisan hostility. This experience enables him to present the inner history of political movements which are not to be found in the ordinary political



annals, and having outlived the often embittered asperities of the past, and when most of his contemporaries, friend and foe, have crossed the dark river, he has been studiously careful to suppress every vestige of resentment, and to give generous justice to those with whom he was in conflict in the long ago.

The aim of these chapters is to present to the people of Pennsylvania, who are so justly proud of their great Commonwealth, a connected chronological story of the advancement of our great State since the adoption of the reform Constitution in 1838, presenting with absolute candor the many and earnest struggles made for advancement beginning more than half a century ago, and portraying the leading actors as they rose and fell in political conflicts, with their capabilities and methods, giving to the student of to-day in a single publication the inner history of Pennsylvania politics, and the desperate battles fought for the advancement that makes our grand Commonwealth to-day the richest and most progressive of all the States of the Union.

In several works previously issued by the author, some of the incidents presented in this work have been given to the public, but their omission in these chapters, which present a complete and chronological record of political and other important events, would leave it imperfect.

The Governors of the State chosen under the several constitutions are given in portraits by groups, the first presenting Governors Mifflin, McKean, Snyder, Findley, Heister, Schulze, Wolf and Ritner, chosen under the Constitution of 1790. The second presents Governors Porter, Shunk, Johnston, Bigler, Pollock, Packer, Curtin, Geary and Hartranft, elected under the Constitution of 1838, and the last gives Governors Hoyt, Pattison, Beaver, Hastings, Stone and Pennypacker, chosen under the Constitution of 1874.



Pennsylvania had varied methods of government prior to the establishment of the Constitution of 1790. The Dutch rule began with 1609 and continued until 1638; the Dutch and Swedish rule prevailed from 1638 to 1655, and the Dutch rule again became omnipotent and lasted until 1664. The chief executive was then known as Vice Director, and many changes were made. The conflict between the English and Dutch led to the establishment of the English rule from 1664 to 1673, when the Dutch Deputy Governor re-established the rule of his race, and the English regained their rule in 1674 and continued it until 1681, when the proprietary government under Penn was established. It continued under various Deputy Governors, including several of the Penn family, until 1777, when the Supreme Executive Council was organized with Thomas Wharton, Jr., as President, who was succeeded by George Bryan in 1778, and he in turn was succeeded by Joseph Reed at the close of the same year, who was succeeded by John Dickinson in 1782, and Benjamin Franklin succeeded Dickinson in 1785, and served until the adoption of the Constitution of 1790.

These chapters tell of the creation and death of the Anti-Masonic party, of the Whig party, and of the American party, all of which were important political factors in our Commonwealth, and they present the interesting story of the origin and strange development of the Republican party that has practically ruled the country for nearly half a century. It is known to all of ordinary intelligence that these parties existed, but the causes which led to their creation, and the struggles and victories and defeats of each, form interesting chapters in the annals of the Commonwealth.

The author has been scrupulously careful to present the political movements herein recorded with entire accuracy, and with



absolute freedom from partisan prejudice, and in discussing public men who have risen and played important parts for more than half a century, the aim has been to err on the side of generous or charitable judgment. The work is presented to the public in the expectation that it will meet an important want, telling the people of our great Commonwealth the story of its leading actors, and how the overshadowing grandeur of Pennsylvania advancement has been achieved.

A. K. M.



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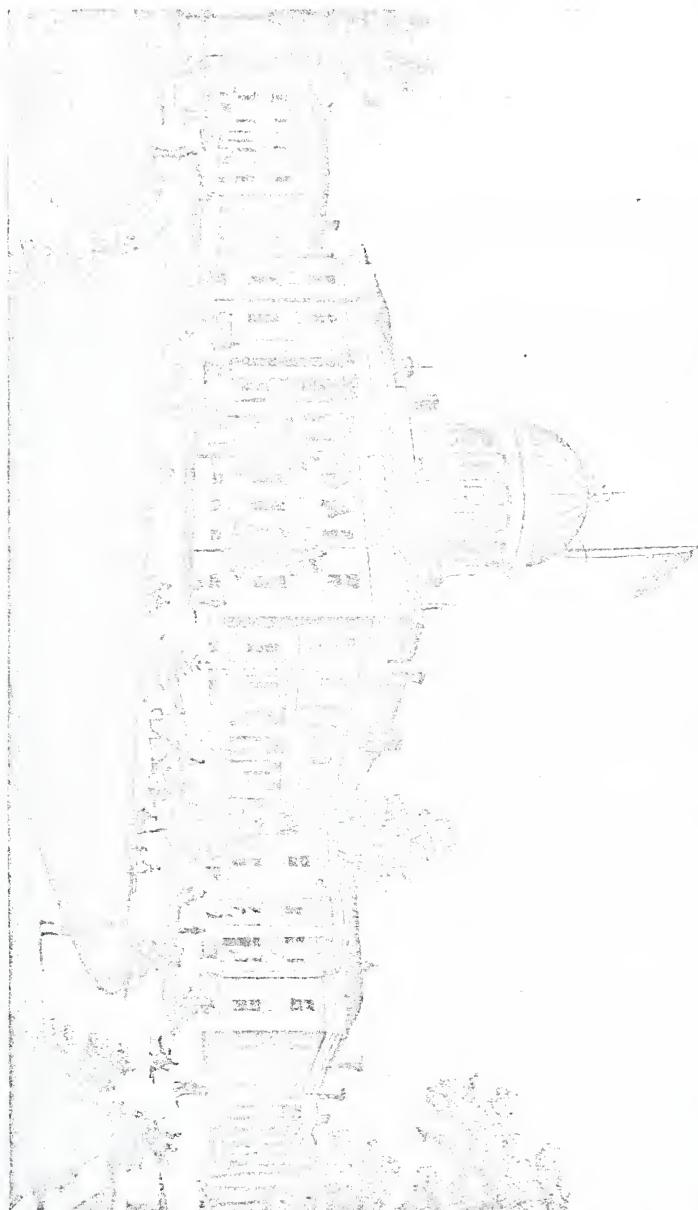
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Old Crystal





## I.

# OLD TIME POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

Not a Steamship on the Seas, Not a Locomotive Drawing Cars when the Writer was Born—The Battle for Free Schools—The Brave Dutch Governor Wolf Defeated for Approving the Measure—The Beautiful Neighborly Qualities—Partisan Intolerance Greater Then than Now, and Political Frauds often Boldly Practised—Our Improved Civilization.

IN PRESENTING the series of "Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania" to the public, I do not propose an autobiography, as the historical events to be given will be of much more importance to the public than the personality of the writer, but as I shall deal wholly with events of which I had more or less personal knowledge, or in which I have more or less personally participated, it will be impossible to repress the little perpendicular pronoun.

They will deal largely with public men and measures which figured prominently in the annals of the Commonwealth, and they will give the inner history of public movements, and of the triumphs and failures of public men, that histories and biographies are usually compelled to ignore.

For many years I was in an humble way aggressively active in the political movements of the State, and like all aggressive men was honored with many enemies, but those struggles, with nearly all of the men who were factors in them, have passed away, and the enmities which they created have long since mellowed into forgetfulness. I feel now that I can safely write even



of the bitterest foes I have made in the conflicts of the past, without a shadow of prejudice.

While I shall endeavor to make these chapters both entertaining and instructive by truthfully portraying important public movements and the men engaged in them, the presentation cannot be entirely complete. Many interesting events happen in a long political life which could not be frankly given to the public. Most men of intelligence and close observation in public affairs become cognizant of movements which cannot be made public while certain actors are living, and of course cannot be made public after their death. The careful student of public men during periods so appallingly eventful as the last forty years in this country, must accept the conclusion that infirmity, differing only in degree, is an invariable attribute of greatness.

It was my good fortune to know more or less intimately all of the great military chieftains and statesmen of the terrible trial that both endured in our Civil War and Reconstruction, and I recall the names of but three men who grow greater as you more closely approach them. They were Abraham Lincoln, General George H. Thomas and Commoner Thaddeus Stevens, and none would pretend that they were perfect in all the great qualities which make up human character. Of all these men whose names stand out in such lustrous distinction in the annals of the Republic saved in the flame of battle, it would be safe to summon the sinless to accuse, and the world would thus be summoned to silence.

When I was born there was not a single steamship on the seas of the world, nor a single train of cars drawn by a locomotive. Ohio was known as the "back woods," and there were vague traditions of boundless fertile prairies beyond stretching out to the Father of Waters. True, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri had been admitted as States, but they were all very



sparsely settled without any means of conveyance but the mud roads which were often impassable. A journey from eastern Pennsylvania to any one of the Western States was then a vastly greater and more perilous undertaking than would be a journey around the world to-day. The entire population of the Republic did not exceed 12,000,000, and Pennsylvania had about 1,250,000, or less than one-fourth of our present population. What was then justly regarded as the great line of public improvements between Philadelphia and Pittsburg, had just been completed and opened a new avenue of trade that was inexorably closed during the winter season, when the only public highways for trade and travel were the turnpikes, chiefly built by the State, over which Conestoga wagons with their six-horse teams handled the trade between Philadelphia, Baltimore and Pittsburg.

Free schools were unknown, and the few who dared to advocate them did not venture to seek political preferment. The cross-road schoolhouse was found in every community, but it was usually the center of a neighborhood five or six miles in diameter. Every schoolhouse had its teacher during the winter season, for which he was usually paid so much by the parent for each scholar, and "boarded around" with his patrons. Teaching was confined to reading, writing and arithmetic, and I well remember the hostility aroused among a large portion of my school district when the violent innovation was made of teaching grammar. It was long resisted, but finally succeeded to the extent of permitting the teacher to teach it, although there were very few who accepted what was generally regarded as such a needless feature of education for their sons. The one green memory I have of the occasional schools of that time is that of the holiday frolic. It was then



that the school children had not only absolute freedom to bar their teacher out and keep him out even with hot pokers if he tried to climb through the window, until he compromised by giving them a liberal supply of apples and nuts. If the teacher had walked away, as he presumably might have done, without undertaking to force his way into the schoolhouse, he would have been promptly dismissed by the school authorities, and, while a majority of the parents of children would have flogged their boys severely at any other time for the antics they played upon the teacher in the holiday season, they were expected even by the strictest of parents to take a full hand in the holiday battle, and the boy who gave the teacher the bravest fight was the hero of the hour. If the teacher fought his way into the schoolhouse or entered it by compromise with the boys, the moment he was within the sanctuary of his authority discipline was instantly resumed, but there could be no punishment for the scholars who were in the fight.

I well remember the early battles made in the neighborhood in which I lived for the acceptance of the free school system. The original free school law was very crude, but it was the best that could be obtained at the time, and it cost the brave Dutch Governor (Wolf) who signed it, and many who had supported it, defeat before the people. It was not compulsory, and at any spring election a certain number of citizens could call for a vote on the acceptance of the free school law, and many times did the few Scotch-Irish in the neighborhood make a brave struggle for the acceptance of free schools, but they were voted down half a dozen times or more by the united vote of the Germans and others who opposed taxation for free education. Our school system was thus of little value, and advancement in it was very slow until Curtin



became secretary of the commonwealth, in 1855, when it was made a distinct department and placed in charge of the assistant secretary of the commonwealth, the late Henry C. Hickok, who had heart and soul in the cause, and under Curtin's direction gave the free school system of our State a standing that commanded general respect.

It was not an uncommon thing in those days to find whole families grow up without a single member of it being able to read or write. Neh Middleswarth, of Union County, who acquired more than State fame as a political leader, and who was speaker of the house for a number of terms, openly and earnestly opposed the school law, and gave as a reason that he had never been to school in his life. Some of his own children grew up without even the ordinary education given in our schools. To exhibit the sentiment of that day on the subject of education there is no better illustration than the defeat of Thaddeus Stevens, in Adams County, for the house of representatives, for the single offense of having carried an appropriation from the State for the Gettysburg College. Not only was the prevailing sentiment of the State against free education for children, but at that time it was implacably hostile to any appropriation for colleges.

The only library to which the young people had access in the rural sections of the State was that consisting of a few books which the Sunday school could manage to get together, and given out to the scholars from week to week. They were few in number, and generally of a cheap but clean class, and the few scholars who were ambitious to learn were thus enabled to indulge to a limited extent their taste for reading. The household library of well-to-do homes consisted of the English or German Bible, and among the Presbyterians the Confession of Faith, and the more ad-



vanced would have Scott's Commentaries and Fox's Book of Martyrs. Beyond these the opportunities of young people for reading were limited to the county newspaper, where any newspaper was taken at all, and the more prosperous families added a religious weekly. School boys and girls learned more at the night spelling school that was always conducted on a sharply competitive principle. It was considered the highest honor of the neighborhood to be at the head of the class, and as a rule the children of that day who were at all inclined to acquire an education were excellent in orthography. Night schools for reading and singing were also common, and were a great source of diversion, as well as of improvement for the young people. It was seldom that a vigorous young man who was able to perform manual labor on the farm or in the shop was ever thought of for any of the professions. If there was a cripple or an invalid in the family the rule was to give him a fair education and make him a teacher, or sometimes he was accorded a collegiate education to devote his life to a profession, chiefly because he was not able to wield the grain cradle and the flail.

The memory of the people of those days that comes to me with the sweetest incense is that of the serene content that prevailed among all classes and conditions. No one possessed great wealth, but none were so poor that they could not have food and raiment unless hindered by serious illness. In such cases there were always prompt and generous ministrations. The sick and the sorrowing of every community were known in almost every household, and where there was want there was always a most willing supply. No matter how people differed in polities or in religion, or on any of the other questions which at times divided rural communities, the duty of caring for the children of sorrow was accepted by all. Religion was the com-



mon law, and Sunday was made a day of most tedious and laborious worship. The neighborly feeling that was cherished by all was one of the most beautiful attributes of human nature, and it is a misfortune that it has almost wholly perished as the railroad, the telegraph, the newspaper and all the other many agencies of progress have transformed our rural communities of the long ago into the unrest of modern and better civilization. There can be no great transformation of the tastes and habits of a people without some loss of that which should have been preserved; but, discounted by all the unrest that modern civilization has brought, it has made men and women stronger and nobler, and has vastly greater sources of restraint than were thought of in the quiet days of the contented rural life. The house in which I was born and reared, although a brick building and comfortably furnished, never had a lock on door or window, and the burglar, or even the petty sneak thief, was entirely unthought of.

It is a common and very erroneous belief that the political battles of the early days were much more dignified, and much more free from dishonest manipulation than the political contests of the present. The student of our history who carefully studies the early political contests of Pennsylvania will find that a degree of political intolerance prevailed even among the more intelligent citizens that would not now be tolerated in any community. Party leadership as a rule was more blindly followed than it is to-day, as few even of the more enlightened people accepted any political literature but that which came from a country party organ, or from other partisan sources. Party revolts were as common then as now, and often precipitated the most desperate and defamatory contests, and the State political struggle of 1838 between Ritner and Porter has never been approached in any modern



political struggle in reckless prostitution of the ballot or in malignant, wanton defamation. No political journal with any pretension to decency could print to-day against a candidate any of the many defamatory articles which swept over the State like a tempest in 1838. A larger measure of fraud has doubtless been perpetrated in modern elections, but as far as the limited opportunities of that day offered, the game of fraud was played to the limit. One township in Huntingdon County returned 1,060 majority for Ritner in a district where there were not 200 citizens. The excuse given for the vote was that there was a breach in the canal and that some 800 laborers had been employed, when it would not have been possible to give employment to half the number. The new railroad in Adams County for which Stevens had obtained State aid, and that was commonly known in political circles as "the tapeworm," swelled the majority in Adams up in the thousands, and dual returns for members of the Legislature in the county of Philadelphia led to the creation of two houses at Harrisburg and wrote the history of the Buckshot War to shame the annals of the State.

Political intolerance became very general in the early struggles between Jefferson and Adams, and the desperate methods which party leaders adopted in those days prove that defiant disregard of the popular will is not a modern invention. One of the most disgraceful records made by the Pennsylvania Legislature was when in 1800 it literally stole seven electoral votes from Jefferson and transferred them to Adams. It did not affect the result, and, therefore, it was a political crime without compensation. The Federalists dominated the senate and the Jefferson Republicans controlled the house and had a majority on joint ballot. There was then no general law providing for the choice of electors in Pennsylvania, but at each of



the previous presidential elections the Legislature had passed a special act authorizing the people to vote for electors. Governor McKean summoned the Legislature in time to provide for a popular election, but the Federal senate, knowing that Jefferson would carry the State, refused to pass an act authorizing the people to vote.

Under the Constitution it is within the power of a State to choose electors as the Legislature shall direct, and in the absence of a popular vote it is competent for any Legislature to choose presidential electors. Not only did the Federal senate refuse to permit the passage of the bill providing for an election, but it refused to go into joint convention to choose presidential electors, because in the convention the friends of Jefferson had a majority. The State was entitled to fifteen electors, and the Federal senate finally proposed to the house that its members would go into joint convention upon the condition that each house should first name eight candidates for electors and that in the joint convention none should be voted for but the sixteen thus presented. The friends of Jefferson were compelled to accept the proposition or to lose the entire vote of the State, and they accepted the terms and thereby got eight of the fifteen votes for Jefferson, while Adams received seven.

Probably the most aggressive display of intolerance in early days was exhibited by the Jackson Democrats of Pennsylvania. How it happened no one can tell, for there seemed never to be any special reason given for it, but it is none the less true that Jackson was more reverenced and more blindly worshiped in Pennsylvania than in any other State of the Union. For scores of years after his death it was a common saying that the Democrats of the Tenth Legion section of the State never stopped voting for Jackson. It was the



Jackson ticket all the time, even long after he was dead, and at the Fourth of July celebrations of those times, the militia reviews, the corn huskings and other occasions which brought the people together, knock-downs to clinch political arguments were inevitable.

A fair illustration of political ethics of that day is given in the vote of one of the river townships of the Juniata Valley, where out of nearly one hundred votes there was but one Federalist. He was a highly respected citizen, an excellent neighbor, a large land-owner, and was so highly esteemed that he was allowed to vote the Federal ticket without offensive criticism. In 1824 Jackson received the entire vote of the township with a single exception, and as that was the vote of John Light, a respected neighbor, everything went off harmoniously. In 1828, when Adams and Jackson ran again, the township was canvassed as usual, and it rounded up all for Jackson except John Light. The election was held at a stillhouse, and the Jackson rooters were enthused by fresh whisky. Nearly all waited for the vote to be counted and, to the utter consternation of the Jackson people, there were three Adams votes in the box. One vote for Adams was all right, but the entire Jackson force at once started in for an aggressive search to find the two others who had betrayed the party. One was soon discovered as a laborer who had been discharged some time before by a prominent Jackson man, and he was whipped on the spot. After a most careful search they were unable to fix definitely upon the other criminal, but strong suspicion attached to two persons, and in order to make sure of it the Jackson boys whipped both.

When it is remembered that John Adams, when defeated by Jefferson in 1800, refused to remain in the President's house to receive his successor, the common people of that day should not be harshly blamed for



their political intolerance. The universal diffusion of the newspaper in almost every home and the rude song of the iron horse that is heard in almost every valley and hillside, have enlarged the intelligence and broadened the generous attributes of men, and to-day it is most uncommon to see political differences, even among the most aggressive gladiators, lessen their courtesies or impair their friendships. Great and good as were the fathers of the Republic, our civilization of to-day is vastly better, and men and women nobler than they were in what we so often mistakenly refer to as the better days of the past.



## II.

## GOVERNORS RITNER AND PORTER.

Two Ex-Governors Who Survived Their Official Terms Nearly a Quarter of a Century—The Two Most Desperately Defamed Men of Our Political History—The Porter-Ritner Campaign of 1835—The Most Malignant and Desperate of All Our Great Contests—The Personal Qualities of Two Ex-Governors—Whittier Embalmed Ritner in Poetry for His Anti-Slavery Views—Porter Rescued the State from Repudiation.

**I**T HAS been my good fortune to know more or less intimately every Governor of Pennsylvania from Governor Ritner to the present time, with the single exception of Governor Shunk, whom I met only once in a casual way. Of course, I did not know Governor Ritner while he was the chief magistrate of the State, as he entered his office when I was seven years of age, nor did I know Governor Porter personally until after his retirement, but both of them lived to a ripe old age, and both were recognized as important political factors during our Civil War.

These two men furnish more interesting chapters to the early annals of the State than have been written by any of their contemporaries, and neither of them is justly estimated by the people of to-day. They were direct competitors for the gubernatorial chair in the most absorbing and desperate political contest ever known in Pennsylvania, and their administrations cover crucial periods in the establishment of our school system and in the maintenance of State credit.

In those days the people had little opportunity to make the personal acquaintance of their prominent men. Almost every citizen of the State can personally



see the Governor now some time during his term with little inconvenience, but in those days, with no means of transportation but the mud wagon, state candidates made no canvass and met but a very small proportion of the people whose votes they sought, and the rural population very rarely reached the centers where the acquaintance of public men could be made. There was thus some measure of safety in assailing important candidates even to the high-water mark of defamation, and most of the people who opposed Ritner in his various contests believed him to be an ignorant Dutchman, incapable of speaking the English language with anything approaching propriety, and stupid to a degree beneath mediocrity, and most of those who opposed Porter believed him to be entirely destitute of moral attributes and utterly unfitted for responsible public trust.

Many stories were published giving circumstantial illustrations of the ignorance of Ritner. One I recall tells of a prominent citizen of Centre County who visited him in the executive office to obtain an appointment as prothonotary, as the Governor then appointed all the county officers connected with the courts. Governor Ritner was reported as saying that he was taking the counties up alphabetically and that whenever he came to the S's he would make the appointments for Centre. Porter was not charged with ignorance, as he represented a family of scholarly distinction in the State, but there was hardly a crime in the decalogue, excepting murder, with which he was not distinctly charged, and even murder was remotely intimated.

I had an intimate acquaintance with Ritner and Porter for twenty-five years before their deaths, and they were among the most interesting, entertaining and instructive of men. Ritner had been born in Berks County in 1780, and was brought up on his father's farm. He had little opportunity for educa-



tion, but he was a very close student and had a strong partiality for German literature. He learned to speak the English language as near perfectly as possible for one who had not the advantage of a collegiate education, but the German accent was plainly visible. His father removed from Berks County to Cumberland, near Newville, at an early age, where he married, and later removed with his wife's family to Washington County, where he became farmer for his wife's uncle, who was an excellent German scholar and possessed a fine German library. The prospective Governor devoted all his leisure hours to the study of the library of his uncle, and very soon became a man of affairs.

In 1820 he was elected to the house of representatives and was re-elected for five consecutive years, making a service of six years in the body, during two of which he was speaker of the house. The fact that he had been so long chosen to the house by one of the most intelligent counties of the western part of the State and had been twice called to the speakership should have been sufficient answer to all the scandals about his ignorance; and when it is remembered that soon after his retirement from the Legislature in 1829 he was unanimously nominated as the Anti-Masonic or opposition candidate to Governor, Wolf, solely because he was regarded as the ablest man to lead in such a battle, it must seem unaccountable to intelligent readers of the present age that Ritner was heralded all over the State as an utter ignoramus. He was not a political manipulator and his nomination for Governor was made entirely without any effort of his own.

The Anti-Masonic party was then in its infancy, and Ritner was defeated by about 16,000 majority. He was renominated against Wolf for the same office in 1832 and was again defeated by about 3,000 majority. In 1835 he was again unanimously nominated and was



elected by a plurality of nearly 30,000, although he was in a minority of 10,000 on the whole vote. The Democrats had a bolt on the nomination of Governor Wolf for the third term, chiefly because of Wolf's approval of the free school law, and Henry A. Muhlenberg of Berks was nominated as an independent Democratic candidate and polled 40,000 votes to Wolf's 65,000. In 1838 he was given the fourth consecutive nomination for Governor, when the Democrats united on Porter and defeated him by about 5,000 majority.

Ritner had able men about him while Governor of the State. Thomas H. Burrowes, who afterward became conspicuous as one of the great educational leaders of the State, was his secretary of the commonwealth, and Thaddeus Stevens was canal commissioner. Stevens was an able, sagacious and rather desperate political leader. I well remember the general judgment of his political friends when he afterward became prominent in politics as a Whig and Republican. They regarded him as a matchless leader of a minority opposition, but a dangerous leader of a majority. Ritner was thoroughly honest and intelligent, but of a confiding nature, and certainly permitted Stevens to shape some of the most objectionable features of his administration, although Ritner always denied it and I am sure died in the belief that Stevens had never dictated any important feature of his administration policy. I remember meeting Ritner when we were both delegates to a Republican State convention, of which Stevens was also a member, and he and Stevens were not in accord on some important question that was submitted. In a pleasant chat with Ritner after the adjournment he spoke with some earnestness about Stevens' great ability, but added with emphasis: "He's a dangerous leader, and useful as he was I never



permitted him to control my administration when I was governor."

On the absorbing issue of that time Ritner, Stevens and Burrowes were in hearty accord. The new free school law had just been passed, but was not yet in practical operation, and it was so hindered in some localities that its enforcement seemed to be next to an impossibility. Ritner took the boldest stand in favor of perfecting and executing the free school law, and as it was Stevens' own measure the Governor had very hearty support from his canal commissioner. Stevens certainly controlled the Legislature and the Governor against all reason to involve the State in the construction of a railroad in Adams County that became one of the important factors in the defeat of Ritner. A large amount of money was expended on it, but it was abandoned after the defeat of Ritner and never was utilized until within the last few years, when it was found to be useful in perfecting a line to Gettysburg.

Ritner's administration was clean and free from any corrupt profligacy for individual benefit, but under the leadership of Stevens and Burrowes, who was chairman of the Anti-Masonic State committee, every public and private measure was shaped to serve political ends, and often without much regard to the interests of the State. The one distinctly creditable feature of the Ritner administration was the courage and sagacity exhibited in fighting the battle for free schools, and, had the administration at that time been opposed to the system, or even indifferent to its success, its defeat would have been overwhelming.

One of the most notable of state papers which have come from the Governors of Pennsylvania was Ritner's message of 1836, in which he discussed the slavery question. There was then no slavery issue to



be solved in the territories, and the only agitation on the subject was made by the anti-slavery societies, which demanded the abolition of the institution. In this message Ritner arraigned slavery fiercely, and with such exceptional force that the credit of the paper was generally awarded to Stevens. It attracted so much attention that the Quaker poet Whittier published one of his best anti-slavery poems congratulating the Pennsylvania executive. It began:

Thank God for the token, one lip is still free,  
One spirit untrammel'd, unbending one knee,  
Like the echo of the mountain, deep-rooted and firm,  
Erect when the multitude bends to the storm.

I have referred in the previous chapter to the unexampled bitterness and defamation exhibited in Ritner's contest against Porter for re-election in 1838. The new Constitution, or what was commonly called "the reform Constitution," was adopted at the same election. It made sweeping changes in the fundamental law, reducing the judges from a life tenure to a term of years, and taking from the Governor the appointment of all the important county officers and justices of the peace. The returns were slow in coming in those days, but in the course of two or three weeks it was known that Ritner was defeated by Porter by some 5,000 majority. Mr. Burrowes, of the Ritner cabinet and chairman of the Anti-Masonic committee, issued an address stating that a majority of 5,000 had been returned against Ritner, but charging all manner of political frauds and declaring that there must be careful examination into them before the verdict could be accepted. After stating that it was the duty of all to bow to the supremacy of the people, he added: "But, fellow-citizens, until this investigation shall be fully made and fairly determined, let us treat the



election of the 9th inst. as if we had not been defeated, and in that attitude abide the result."

This was simply playing desperate and bungling politics. It was an invitation to revolution, and naturally aroused the Democrats to take such measures as would protect their majority in the State and Legislature. The bloodless Buckshot War was the natural result, and in the end the verdict of the State was accepted and the fairly-won supremacy of Porter and his party was acknowledged.

In 1839 Ritner retired to a farm in Cumberland County, where he lived a farmer's life in very comfortable circumstances for thirty-one years, and there was no more highly respected citizen of the county. He was a frequent visitor to Chambersburg, where some of his children lived, and always called upon me there to talk over the political situation. His interest in politics was unabated until the last. He was a frequent delegate to both county and State conventions, and I met him in the first Republican national convention in 1856, where he served as a delegate. He was a man of very general intelligence, unusually familiar with all public questions, and was a delightful conversationalist. His rugged honesty and kind neighborly qualities made him beloved by all who knew him, and even when he had reached the age of four-score and ten his face would brighten as he spoke of the progress of our common schools.

He always attended the teachers' institutes in his own county and was generally presiding officer, and he journeyed to Erie County in 1861 when eighty-three years of age to inaugurate the first State normal school of that section at Edinboro. He always pointed with pride to the fact that when he became Governor of the State the appropriation to free schools was but \$75,000 annually, and that it had been increased to



\$400,000, while the common schools had increased from 762 with seventeen academies and no female seminaries to 5,000 common schools, 38 academies and seven female seminaries in permanent operation. Pennsylvania has had many more brilliant Governors than Ritner, but it has never had one of more sterling integrity, and his memory should ever be gratefully cherished as the man who laid the broad foundations for our present most beneficent system of free education. On October 16, 1869, he passed across the dark river, after having braved the storms of ninety winters.

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David R. Porter was unlike Ritner in mental and physical organization. Ritner was short, stout and dumpy, while Porter was a man of superb physical proportions, and was a born aggressive leader, while Ritner gave more heed to the men around him. Porter was a man of fair education, and instead of entering college when he was fitted to do so he preferred to go into the surveyor general's office with his father as a clerk with Francis R. Shunk, of the same neighborhood, who later became Governor. He was a man of broad intelligence, aggressive in his ideas, a most sagacious politician, and in every emergency he was his own arbiter of his line of action. When he left the surveyor general's office he located in Huntingdon County, where he was prothonotary and clerk of all the courts for a number of years. His wife aided him in the labors of his office, and the records of deeds and mortgages in that county give many evidences of the legible handwriting and careful work of Mrs. Porter.

He was elected to the house in 1819 and in 1836 was chosen to the senate. There he made himself felt with such emphasis as a leader that Democratic sentiment rapidly gravitated toward him as a candidate to make the desperate battle against Ritner in 1838. The unex-



ampled desperation of the campaign and the equally desperate efforts made to prevent him reaching the office after his election I have already portrayed. He was re-elected in 1841 over John Banks, his Whig competitor, and by more than double the majority he received three years before. His term as Governor was comparatively uneventful, with the single exception of the desperate effort made during his first term to stamp the inefaceable stain of repudiation on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The State debt had grown to enormous proportions by the construction of our public improvements, there was universal prostration in commerce, business and trade, and demagogues were plenty to tell the people that they could not and therefore should not attempt to pay the interest on the debt.

The people of to-day can hardly understand how a great State like Pennsylvania, with 2,000,000 of people, could think of repudiating the interest on a debt of less than \$40,000,000, but there is no doubt that repudiation would have run riot throughout the State and triumphed in the Legislature but for the heroic stand taken by Governor Porter. He had to resort to extraordinary and more than doubtful constitutional measures to save the credit of the State, but he felt that anything was preferable to repudiation, and it is safe to say that that great act, defying the tempest of popular passion, rescued our great Commonwealth from the terrible stigma of repudiation.

Porter retired from his office in 1845, largely estranged from his party, chiefly because his great business interests had brought him in conflict with its views on the protective tariff question. He was one of the first men to introduce the manufacture of iron with anthracite coal in the interior of the State and for some years had a season of great prosperity, but when



the troublous times came he was bankrupted by heavy losses.

Porter was one of the most familiar figures on the streets of Harrisburg during our Civil War, and one of the most patriotic of our citizens. I met him many times in the dark days of the conflict, and although his head was silvered and his eyes dimmed by the infirmities of age, he would become aroused to enthusiasm when the question was discussed, and never despaired of the Republic. His life in Harrisburg was very quiet, but he never ceased to have interest in all public affairs and was regarded as one of the clearest-headed and safest counselors among the people. On August 6, 1867, his life work ended and he was borne to the city of the silent profoundly lamented by all who knew him.



## III.

## JOHN BANNISTER GIBSON.

Pennsylvania's Greatest Jurist—The One Error of the Great Jurist's Life—His Name a Household Word in the Rural Community Where He was Born—His Only Attempt at Poetry—Elected to the Supreme Bench in 1851, and Vacated Chief Justiceship to Black, and Died before it Reached Him again.

THE YEAR 1838 inaugurated a new epoch in the history of the State, and it was revolutionary in its nature. The gubernatorial contest of that year stands out single and alone as the most reckless and defamatory political struggle in Pennsylvania politics, and the adoption of what was then called the "Reform Constitution" changed the whole political system of the State. Under the old Constitution the Governor was given almost unlimited power. He appointed all the judges of the State, and they were commissioned for life or during good behavior. He appointed all the important county officers connected with the courts, including associate judges, of whom there were then two in each county, and all the justices of the peace, thus extending his patronage into every township of the Commonwealth.

The earlier Governors found this patronage a most important political factor, and it was vigorously employed to accomplish a succession of terms in the executive office, but gradually the patronage of the Governor became a source of discord and disturbance as the disappointed were always very many more than the successful applicants. The saying of Jefferson that an appointment to office often made one ingrate and nine enemies was pointedly illustrated at times in



the disposal of patronage, but the Governors invariably wielded their immense, almost boundless, patronage for their own individual advantage, or for the advancement of the political interests with which they were identified.

The amended Constitution of 1838 was adopted by a very small majority, and it was so far-reaching in its political transformations that political leaders and especially officeholders, whose tenures were limited, had great difficulty in adjusting themselves to it. It was opposed by the judges of the State not only with very general unanimity, but in many instances with intense and aggressive hostility. Prior to the adoption of the new fundamental law every judge felt entirely secure in his position for life, and the judges of the supreme court exhibited their hostility to the new Constitution in a manner so offensive to the public sentiment that the agitation began at once for the election of all our judges by the people, and it was consummated just thirteen years later. Any careful student of the political conditions existing in 1838 must reach the conclusion that if the new Constitution had been cordially accepted by the judiciary of the State, and interpreted and enforced with generous respect, an elective judiciary would have been postponed many years beyond 1851, when it was adopted by a large majority. As a limited tenure was provided for all judicial offices, it was necessary to adjust the termination of the existing commissions, and it was provided that the senior supreme judge in commission should retire at the end of three years, and the others follow according to seniority every three years until all were retired. The result was that some of the judges in the State were guilty of very awkward political trickery to extend their terms, and it has always been profoundly regretted by the Pennsylvania bar,

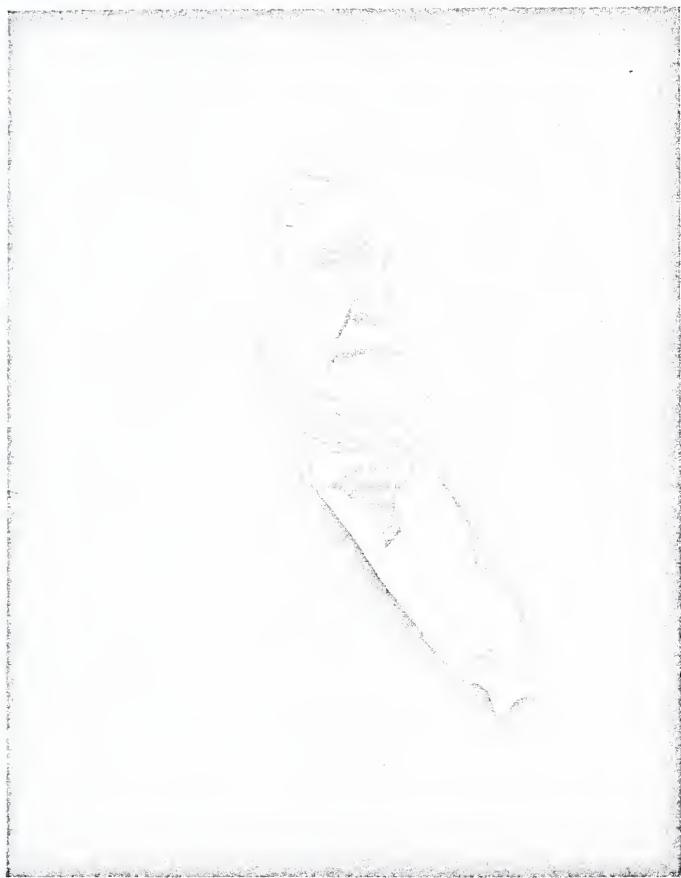


and other intelligent citizens who appreciate the incomparable qualities of John Bannister Gibson as the greatest of our jurists, that he was persuaded to resign his commission as chief justice soon after the adoption of the new Constitution and accept the new commission for a full term from the Governor.

There was no political purpose in this error of Chief Justice Gibson nor in the action of the Governor. The Governor was not his political friend, as Gibson was a pronounced Democrat and headed the Jackson electoral ticket even when he was on the supreme bench, while Governor Ritner, who appointed him, was as pronounced an opponent of Democracy. It is proper to say that the new commission received by Gibson was given him with the approval of his fellow-judge, who was thereby retired three years earlier than he would have been if Gibson's term had not been renewed, and it is also just to say that Governor Ritner was advised to accept the resignation and reappoint the chief justice because his retirement from the bench, which might occur in three years, would strip that tribunal of its ablest interpreter of the law. Nevertheless it had all the semblance of political trickery, and it grieved the venerable jurist during his entire career.

Like some others of the great jurists of the world, Gibson was not a successful lawyer and advocate. In a letter written to W. M. Roberts soon after his appointment he frankly told the pathetic story of the necessities which compelled him to yield to a movement that did not comport with the dignity of the highest judicial tribunal. In that letter he said: "To me who for a bare subsistence have given the flower of my life to the public instead of my dependent family, a continuance in office for the longest period was a matter of vital importance, but the arrangement of the convention, unintentionally severe to me or to any one





John Bannister Gibson



else, proposed to consign me to penury and want at a time of life when I could scarcely expect to establish myself in practice, which under the most favorable circumstances requires several years. This was known to my brethren and felt by them as men." He was thus continued as chief justice until 1851, when by special amendment of the Constitution every judicial office in the State was vacated in a single day. He had represented Cumberland, his native county, in the Legislature, and as early as 1813 he was appointed president judge of the district composed of Tioga, Bradford, Susquehanna and Luzerne. Three years later, in 1816, he was appointed an associate justice of the supreme court, and on the 18th of May, 1827, he was commissioned as chief justice. Although his vigor was much abated, he was nominated as one of the five Democratic candidates for supreme judge by the Democratic convention of 1851, being the only member of the court nominated by that party. The Whigs nominated Judge Coulter as an Independent Democrat, and he was the only candidate on the Whig ticket elected, defeating the late Judge Campbell, of Philadelphia.

Judge Collins, of Lancaster, was another of the judges who decided to extend his term of office by resignation and reappointment. The legality of his new commission was disputed in the courts and Justice Kennedy, who delivered the judgment of the supreme court (8th Watts, 344), made a most insolent attack upon popular government because the people had adopted the new Constitution. In a solemn judicial deliverance he declared the expected reform of the new Constitution to be "the product of a delusion that has been the ruin of nations in times past quite as wise, intelligent and virtuous at one time of their existence as we have any right to claim to be," to which he added, "it would



seem as if the empty pride and incorrigible vanity of our nature was without fail either sooner or later to consign us to some such unhappy destiny as ever ought to be deprecated." The people of those days viewed the judicial position with a much larger measure of sanctity than is common at the present time, and any act of our judicial tribunal that brought reproach upon the administration of justice was regarded as an unpardonable offense. The people had chosen to amend the fundamental law and to take to themselves much of the powers which they had conferred upon their executive. They did not assume to select judges by popular vote, but they simply limited the judicial tenure because they believed that the judges needed at times the restraining influence of intelligent public sentiment.

It was in sorrow rather than in anger that they witnessed Chief Justice Gibson's questionable method of extending his term of office, as they all appreciated his unblemished integrity and his masterly ability, but when another member of the same court, in a judicial deliverance from the bench, denounced the people as vain fools who must sooner or later destroy their government and their own liberties, they were goaded to active and earnest resentment. In addition, the judges generally, high and low, viewed the new Constitution with disfavor and availed themselves of every opportunity to expose its alleged errors and to bring it into contempt. It was this feeling that aroused the people to steadily enlarge their own powers by withdrawing from the Governor authority they had delegated, as is exhibited in the action of the Legislature making the auditor general, the surveyor general and the district attorney elective officers, and by 1850 the Legislature passed by an overwhelming majority in both branches an amendment to the Con-



stitution making every judicial office in the State the creation of the people by popular vote.

Chief Justice Gibson is one of the most notable characters of Pennsylvania, and no one character is so carefully and so kindly studied by the legal profession of the State as is that of the great jurist. He stands in the annals of the Commonwealth head and shoulders above his fellow great jurists, and his decisions are not only quoted in his State and country by judicial tribunals, but they have been quoted and commended in the courts of England. I did not know our great chief justice personally until within five years of his death, as he was chief justice of Pennsylvania a year before I was born. His name was a household word in the community of my boyhood, as his place of birth was only a very few miles from my own home. His name was referred to with a pride that is natural in a primitive rural community when one of their own number has reached the highest distinction in the State, and among my early recollections I recall the chief justice's brother, Frank Gibson, as the man who played the fiddle for nearly or quite all the dances, corn huskings and butter boilings of the neighborhood. The chief justice, like his brother, was passionately fond of the violin, and even until the latest years of his life he would retire to his room alone and enjoy his own music on his favorite instrument.

He was a man of most commanding presence and perfect physical proportions. In a letter written to a friend some time before his death, he said: "I was born among the mountains of Cumberland (now Perry) County. Fox hunting, fishing, gunning, rifle shooting, swimming, wrestling and boxing with the natives of my age were my exercises and amusements." In such a strenuous life it is not marvelous that he developed superb physical proportions, and his magnificently



chiseled face ever arrested the attention of even the most casual observer. I had few opportunities in my brief acquaintance with him of seeing him alone, but I sought every opportunity to do so because he was one of the most delightful conversationalists, and being from the same community that had given him birth he loved to talk about his own people and his neighbors for whom he cherished the liveliest affection. The only attempt he ever made at poetry was when late in life he visited the dilapidated home of his birth after an absence of many years. It is not a great poem, but it shows the simple tastes of the great jurist, and the heartstrings of love which went out to his old home surroundings. It might be said of Gibson's poem as Horace Greeley said in reviewing the poems of John Quincy Adams, that they show "what middling things a great man may do." I quote the first and last of the six stanzas:—

The home of my youth stands in silence and sadness,  
None that tasted its simple enjoyments are there,  
No longer its walls ring with glee and with gladness,  
No train of blithe melody breaks on the ear.

But time ne'er retraces the footsteps he measures;  
In fancy alone with the Past we can dwell,  
Then take my last blessing, lov'd scene of young pleasures;  
Dear home of my childhood—forever farewell.

I saw him frequently on the bench, but his great work was then done and his faculties somewhat abated. When hearing arguments he rarely manifested interest in the case, and it was a common complaint of lawyers that he was in the habit of dozing in utter forgetfulness of their arguments, but when a case interested him, or when a great deliverance was to be made by the court, he seemed to be able to summon all his old-time faculties and to be fully himself. He was a man of the



sweetest disposition and as unpretending as he was great. He did not succeed at the bar. He first located in Carlisle, the seat of his native county, but soon became discouraged and located in Beaver, Pa., whence after an unsuccessful effort he removed to Hagerstown, Md., where he remained for several years, but without attaining professional success, when he returned to his old home in Carlisle, and that remained his home until his death. He was very sensitive about his age. He was often twitted by his associates on the bench about making himself younger than he really was, and one time when the subject was under discussion in a playful way one of his associates asked him to enumerate the places he had lived and how long he had lived in each. He recited all but Hagerstown, when he was reminded that he had omitted that place where he had spent several years, to which the veteran chief responded, that it would be unfair to charge him with the number of years that he had lived in that village.

When the justices were made elective in 1851 he had served thirty-eight years continuously as a judge and thirty-three of that period as a justice or chief justice of the supreme court. He was then past the patriarchal age, and exhibited evidences of feebleness, but the leading members of the bar felt that it would be a dishonor to the Commonwealth to cast aside her greatest jurist. The position of supreme judge was sought by many aspirants, and but for the struggles of competitors for the place he would have been given a very cordial nomination, but those who wanted judicial honors pleaded his age and infirmities to advance their own cause, and he was finally nominated by a very small majority, chiefly through the efforts of two prominent young members of the bar of the State, both of whom afterward served on the supreme court, viz.,



Chief Justice Mercier, of Bradford, and Justice William A. Porter, of Philadelphia.

The Democratic ticket was successful by about 8,000 majority with the single exception of the late Judge Campbell, of Philadelphia, who was defeated by Justice Coulter, one of the Whig candidates, although a Democrat, and the five new judges—Gibson, Lowrie, Lewis, Coulter and Black—were required to ascertain by lot which should serve the three, six, nine, twelve and fifteen-year terms, the one choosing the shortest term to be accepted as the senior member of the court, and chief justice. Judge Black, the youngest of all the members of the court, drew the short term and became chief justice. Gibson drew the nine-year term, and when he did so he said that that would just about round out his life and enable him to die as the chief of the court, but he seemed to have lost interest in his judicial work, and he performed his labors in the most perfunctory way. He gradually became more and more infirm, and on the 3d of May, 1853, in the 73d year of his age, John Bannister Gibson, the greatest of Pennsylvania jurists, passed away to join the great majority beyond.



## IV.

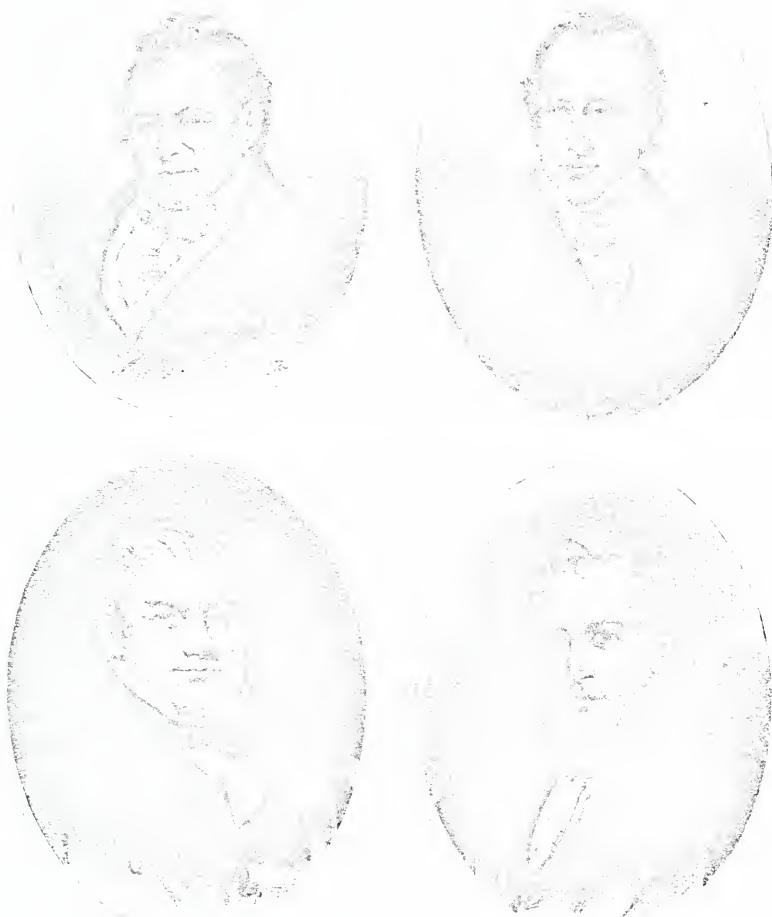
## THE BUCKSHOT WAR.

A Disgraceful Chapter in the Annals of Pennsylvania—Fraudulent Election in Philadelphia County was the Primary Cause—Two Delegations Returned as Elected to the House—Two Speakers Elected—The Militia Ordered to Harrisburg to Preserve Order—Penrose, Stevens and Burrowes Escaped from the Senate Through a Window—Problem Solved by Anti-Masonic Senator John Strohm Voting to Recognize the Hopkins Democratic House.

THE “Buckshot War” is now at times referred to by those interested in the history of Pennsylvania in the misty memory that mingles tradition and history. I cannot recall a single history of that interesting event that has ever been given to the public. It was threshed over in political campaigns for many years after it had cast its shadows upon the annals of the State, but there are very few who to-day could give intelligent answer to the question, “What was the ‘Buckshot War’ of 1838-9?” It was called the “Buckshot War” because in one or more orders of the State Government calling upon the military companies to report at Harrisburg were instructions to them to be supplied with the regulation ball and buckshot cartridge of that time. It consisted of one ball and three buckshot, and continued to be the regulation cartridge of the old smooth-bore musket until after our Civil War began, when the rifled musket, in which only a single ball could be used, soon became a necessity.

There would have been no “Buckshot War” and no serious trouble during the Legislature of 1838-9 but for the fact that after the full returns for Governor in





Governors under Constitution of 1790

Joseph Hinster J. Andrews Schulze

George Wolf Joseph Ritner



1838 were obtained, Porter was given a majority of some 6,000 on the face of the returns, and they were disputed in a revolutionary spirit, although when the time came for the inauguration of the new Governor no opposition of any kind was interposed and Porter was qualified with imposing ceremonies. Immediately after the official returns had been ascertained and given to the public, Thomas H. Burrowes, of Lancaster, then secretary of the commonwealth, and chairman of the State executive committee of the Anti-Masonic party, published an address to the people of the State declaring that if the returns presented had been fairly produced all good citizens should quietly submit to them, but he declared that "there was such a strong probability of malpractice and fraud in the whole transaction that it is our duty peacefully to resist it and fully to expose it."

If he had adhered to the proclaimed policy of peacefully resisting and exposing alleged frauds there would have been no disturbance, but the concluding sentence of his address made it a revolutionary proclamation. It was in these words: "But, fellow-citizens, until this investigation be fully made and fairly determined, let us treat the election of the 9th instant as if we had not been defeated, and in that attitude abide the result." Even this revolutionary deliverance would not have caused serious apprehension under ordinary circumstances, but when it is remembered that Ritner, the defeated candidate for Governor, was in office and exercising all the powers of the government, and that Burrowes, who had inspired revolution, was his secretary of the commonwealth, and the official head of the party organization, the declaration was accepted as a defiantly avowed purpose to violently resist the inauguration of Governor Porter and the admission of his friends to the control of the popular branch of the Legislature.



It must be remembered that this address of Mr. Burrowes was delivered to the people of Pennsylvania in the midst of the most intensely inflamed partisan bitterness. The contest had been entirely unexampled in vituperation and in the desperation of political methods on both sides, and what was accepted as a revolutionary declaration from Mr. Burrowes aroused the Democrats to the most intense and aggressive resistance. Not only was the governorship involved, but the control of the house of representatives became part of the dispute, as the opposing Democratic and Anti-Masonic candidates for the house from the county of Philadelphia both claimed to be elected, and the admission of either decided the political control of the house.

Considering the opportunities for the perpetration of fraud in those primitive days, there was fearful pollution of the ballot, and neither side could claim exemption. In Huntingdon County, where Governor Porter resided, the vote for President in 1836 was 1,340 for Van Buren and 2,623 for Harrison. Two years later the vote for Governor was 2,761 for Porter and 3,637 for Ritner. Porter nearly doubled his party vote, chiefly because he was highly respected by the people of the county, who became well acquainted with him during his long service in the county offices, and while he certainly received the votes of over a thousand of those politically opposed to him, the vote against him was increased a thousand over the vote cast for Harrison in 1836. This vote was obtained almost wholly by the return of nearly or quite one thousand majority for Ritner in Morris Township, where a convenient break in the canal was made the pretext for employing a large number of men on public works.

Adams, the home of Stevens, also gave Porter 400 more votes than were given the Democratic candidate



for President two years before, but the vote for Ritner was more than double that given to Harrison. This vote was excused on the ground that a large number of men were employed on the Gettysburg Railroad. In Lycoming County, the vote of Youngwomanstown, where there was another convenient break on the canal, returned 500 majority for Ritner, the majority being much more than the entire legal vote. This return was regarded as entirely too flagrant to be received and was rejected. In Philadelphia both sides gave a pretty free range to election frauds, but the Democrats fully held their own. So intense was the political bitterness of the time that party advantage was sought by leaders and excused by followers generally, regardless of the methods adopted to attain it.

Philadelphia County was naturally Democratic. The vote for President in 1836 in the city proper, then limited by the two rivers east and west, and South and Vine Streets, gave Harrison 5,747 and Van Buren 3,028, while Philadelphia County gave Van Buren 7,975 to 6,536 for Harrison. Philadelphia city elected the Anti-Masonic legislative ticket, and in Philadelphia County the Democrats claimed that their legislative ticket was chosen by about one thousand majority, while the Anti-Masons claimed that such frauds had been perpetrated that their ticket should be returned as successful. In those days the return judges of each election precinct met on Friday after the election to compute the returns and certify the result. The Democratic return judges of Philadelphia County unitedly computed and certified the election of all their candidates, and the Anti-Masonic judges manipulated the returns and certified that all their candidates were successful.

These returns under the law were sent to the secretary of the commonwealth, who was Mr. Burrowes, and who was also chairman of the Anti-Masonic State



committee. It was his duty to present the returns to the Legislature at its meeting, but it soon became understood that he would only present the Anti-Masonic returns from Philadelphia County, which, it was assumed, would admit the Anti-Masonic representatives on a *prima facie* right to hold their seats. The Democrats well knew that if the Anti-Masonic delegation from Philadelphia County was admitted, thereby giving that party the absolute control of the house, there would be no possibility of successful contest for the Democrats. It thus became a rather clearly defined issue, revolutionary action on the part of the Anti-Masons to hold the control of the government and of the popular branch of the Legislature, and of the Democrats to prevent their party from being defrauded out of their victory, that would give them possession of State authority.

The worst element of Philadelphia politics was appealed to, and open declarations were made that violence even to murder would be committed if necessary to prevent the Anti-Masons from grasping the power that had been denied them by the people. Many private conferences and even public meetings were held at which most thrilling revolutionary deliverances were given, and there is little doubt that there would have been riot and murder at Harrisburg when the Legislature convened had the Anti-Masons not finally determined to accept the election of Porter, and to permit his inauguration without interference. But that only scotched the revolutionary snake without killing it. The control of the house depended upon the admission of one of the two disputing delegations from Philadelphia County, and both sides avowed their determination to make it a fight to a finish. Bands of armed toughs in Philadelphia openly proclaimed their purpose to attend the meeting of the Legislature



and to resist, by riotous measures if necessary, the refusal of the house to seat the Democratic delegation from the county. That there was danger of riot and murder at Harrisburg there can be no doubt, and the riotous purpose of the leaders, who meant to fight and kill, was justified or excused by their party leaders because Secretary Burrowes had given notice by public address that he would treat the election as if it had not been held.

Governor Ritner was brought face to face with a condition that threatened to plunge the Capital into anarchy, and instead of giving the assurance to the public that both the returns from Philadelphia County would be transmitted to the house, leaving that body to exercise its supreme right as judge of the election and qualification of its members, which would have greatly, if not wholly, allayed the riotous sentiment, he summoned a number of companies of militia to Harrisburg to protect the capital and officers of the government. He must have been very seriously alarmed at the threatened invasion of the capital by thousands of Philadelphians bent on revolutionary and probably murderous action, as he appealed to the President of the United States for military aid, but it was very properly refused.

The militia companies ordered to Harrisburg were on hand, but they simply marched up the hill and then marched down again, as they really had no duties to perform, nor did they in any way restrain the Democratic revolutionists. They ascertained that the battle for the Philadelphia County delegation could be fought out in the house without war, but the rioters remained to see that their side had fair play, and they did not consider anything fair play but a victory for their side. The presence and movements of the militia were fearfully ridiculed throughout the entire State, and the



whole movement would have been regarded as farcical but for the serious attitude in which it placed a great commonwealth as summoning its own militia to preserve order at the Capital for the inauguration of a Governor and the organization of a legislature. The troops remained for only a brief period, as the peaceful inauguration of Porter was conceded, and the Legislature assumed to solve the problem presented to it in its own way.

Secretary Burrowes in presenting the returns to the house, as is the duty of the secretary of the commonwealth at the beginning of each session, sent only the return of the Anti-Masonic candidates from the city of Philadelphia, but the Democrats were fortified with a certified copy of the return under the seal of the court, and that return was also presented by a member of the house. Both the delegations from Philadelphia County were present in the hall of the house when the clerk called that body to order, and the Democrats, with the aid of the Democratic representatives from Philadelphia County, proceeded to elect William Hopkins speaker, while the Anti-Masons, with the aid of their Philadelphia County delegation, elected Thomas S. Cunningham. The singular spectacle was thus presented in the house of representatives of two speakers, and each having received what purported to be a majority vote of the house.

The possession of the chair became at once a question of might and not of right, and the Democrats, having an immense outside support with which it was very dangerous to trifle, managed to get Hopkins in the chair, while Cunningham, when he attempted to take his seat on the speaker's platform, was assisted down to the floor of the house by anything but gentle methods. All the legislative business was at an end, and the executive and State departments were closed.



The appearance of the military had little effect, as the mob was discreetly careful to avoid conflict with the troops. With the mob practically controlling the legislative halls inside, and the militia keeping peace outside, the house kept up the farcical contest between the two speakers until, after a considerable period of disorder, Senator John Strohm, of Lancaster, an Anti-Mason of high character and intelligence, deserted his party and gave the casting vote in favor of recognizing the Hopkins house.

That practically ended the controversy, as when an Anti-Masonic senate had recognized a Democratic house there was no longer any basis for continuing the contest. Strohm was bitterly denounced for what was regarded as an act of apostacy, but he lived long enough to be generally and earnestly commended by all good citizens of every political faith for having had the courage to be honest, at the expense of party favor, in the severest crisis that ever confronted the State. Stevens moved to Lancaster some years thereafter, and I remember seeing him there in 1851 when I was a delegate to the Whig State convention, and aided in nominating John Strohm as the Whig candidate for canal commissioner. I met Stevens soon after the convention adjourned, and asked him how he regarded the nomination of Strohm. He answered in his curt, grim way: "He's our candidate now and I forgive him." He was in Congress during the Mexican War, and one of the thirteen Whigs of the body who had the courage to vote against an appropriation to the army in Mexico because the act began by declaring that "we are at war by the act of Mexico." The Whigs moved to strike the offensive, and as they believed untrue, statement from the bill, but were defeated by a party vote, and when they had to meet the question of voting for the bill containing the false statement of historical



facts, or vote against appropriating money for the army, all but thirteen supported the measure, but John Strohm believed it to be untrue, and he resolutely voted against the bill. He lived to a ripe old age, and died universally beloved by his people.

It was during this struggle at Harrisburg that an interesting episode occurred in which Thomas H. Burrowes, Thaddeus Stevens, and Charles B. Penrose were the actors. Penrose was a member of the senate from Cumberland County, Burrowes was secretary of the commonwealth, and Stevens was canal commissioner. They were all in the senate chamber along with a great crowd one evening during the most angry period of the "Buckshot War" trouble. A number of men were there known to be of a riotous character, and one of them jumped on a senatorial desk and declared: "We are in the midst of a revolution, bloodless as yet," and almost immediately afterward the lights in the senate were put out by the mob. Stevens, Penrose and Burrowes at once retreated into a little committee room that was connected with the senate chamber, hoisted a window and jumped out to the street, some six or eight feet below. It is quite likely that they did a very wise thing, as they were regarded as the active leaders in the political efforts to prevent the Democrats from reaping the fruits of their victory. Penrose was speaker of the senate, and was one of the ablest of the political leaders of any party in the State. He was ambitious to win a cabinet position under Harrison and was very strongly supported for it, as was Josiah Randall, father of Samuel J. Randall, then a leading Whig or Anti-Mason, but Pennsylvania was denied a position in the cabinet, and Penrose was appointed to the position of Solicitor of the Treasury. He resigned his seat in the senate to accept the Washington office, and afterwards removed to Philadelphia, the place of



his birth, where he was again elected to the senate in 1856, and died while a member of that body. He was the grandfather of our present United States Senator, Boies Penrose, whose political ambition and ability come honestly from his distinguished ancestor.





Hendrick B. Wright



## V.

## RESCUED FROM REPUDIATION.

Pennsylvania with \$40,000,000 of Debt was Unable to Pay Interest in 1841—Loans Were Authorized but Not Taken—For Months the Cloud of Repudiation Hung Over Our Great State—Porter Rescued It by a Forced Loan from the Banks Authorizing Them to Issue the \$3,000,000 Needed by the State in Relief Notes—The State Credit was Saved by the Courage and Ability of Porter.

ONE of the most interesting chapters in the varied annals of our great Commonwealth is that presenting the story of the desperate struggle made in 1840-41 to prevent the State from being plunged into the maelstrom of open repudiation. Those who know only of Pennsylvania's history during the present generation can have no just conception of the terrible prostration of industry, commerce and trade that gradually followed the financial revulsion of 1837. There were then few private corporations in the State outside of the banks, and, with the exception of the brief period of the Ritner administration, they were not regarded with favor. The Democrats of that day were more or less earnestly opposed to all banking institutions, and constantly clamored for an utterly impossible specie currency.

Banks were indispensable to the business of the State, and many were chartered from time to time, but usually under most exacting conditions. All of them were organized under special charters varying in their franchises and responsibilities, and a large portion of them were what came to be known as "wild cat" banking institutions. A large majority of the country banks were under par, varying from 1 to 10 per cent., and



utter failures of banks were quite common. The land of the farmers was taxed because there were no great corporations from which to demand tribute for the support of the State, and as the debt increased and the ability of the people to pay diminished under the severe strain of the financial revulsion that continued from '37 to '42, the financial condition of the State grew worse and worse until finally in 1841 there was very general popular claimor for open repudiation.

Our system of internal improvements, beginning at turnpikes and ending with the main line of canal and railroad between Philadelphia and Pittsburg, and other canals, began as early as 1820, when the debt of the State was \$530,000. The revenues that year were \$440,000, and the expenditures \$453,000. Public sentiment was imperative in demanding the rapid prosecution of our public improvements, as nearly every section of the State was directly benefited by the main line and the various canals. The result was that the debt steadily and rapidly accumulated until in 1840 the funded debt of the State reached \$36,168,528.10, and it continued to increase until 1852, when it reached the high-water mark of \$41,-534,875.37.

On a large portion of this debt 6 per cent. interest was paid in lawful money, then confined to gold and silver. There was but little specie in circulation even before the suspension of the banks after the crisis of 1837. Silver dollars were then worth a premium, and were entirely withdrawn. One and two dollar bills were issued by the banks, and generally kept in circulation until it was almost impossible to distinguish what bank had issued them, and the final destruction of such notes was a source of large profit to the bank. The silver currency in circulation was almost wholly Spanish coins of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  cents, commonly called "fips,"  $12\frac{1}{2}$



cent pieces, commonly called "levies," and a coin somewhat like our 25 cents, that passed freely as a quarter, although intrinsically worth less, and many of them were worn so smooth that it was impossible to make out any inscription.

The life of the people generally throughout the State was one of severe economy, and they were ill prepared to maintain their great debt when industry and trade were terribly prostrated. Governor Ritner retired from office within a year after the revulsion began, and before it had been seriously felt throughout the State. When Governor Porter succeeded him he found that the grave problem before him was how to maintain the credit of the Commonwealth. He was inaugurated on the third Tuesday of January, 1839, and the third act passed by the Legislature and presented to him for approval was a loan bill of \$1,200,000 to be applied first to the payment of interest on the public debt, next to such claims due on account of internal improvements, with the residue to any deficit in the internal improvement fund, and on the 30th day of January he was called to sign another act of the Legislature authorizing a loan of \$602,250 to be applied to the payment of the interest on the public debt. This was a temporary loan obviously passed because there were grave doubts about the success of the larger loan approved only a week before, and the temporary loan was to be repaid out of the proceeds of the permanent loan when realized. It happened, however, that the loan was not realized, and thus debt was being piled upon debt with the sources of payment diminished.

It was not difficult for the Legislature to pass loan bills, but it was soon discovered that taking the horse to the water was an easy thing, but to make him drink was an entirely different proposition. The credit of the Commonwealth was practically exhausted, and



loans could not be negotiated. It was finally decided that as the banks were at the mercy of the State, all of them having suspended specie payments, a heavy hand could be laid upon them, and force them to give financial aid to the State. By an act approved April 3, 1840, it was provided that all the banks of the State must resume specie payments on the 15th of January, 1841, and pay all their liabilities in gold or silver coin "under the penalty of forfeiture of their charters, to be declared forfeited as hereinafter provided of any and all banks refusing to do so." The same section legalized the suspension until the time fixed for resumption. Detailed provisions were then made for the forfeiture and closing up of all the banks which failed to resume according to the statute.

In consideration of the State legalizing the suspension of the banks until April, 1841, they were required to loan to the Commonwealth in proportion to their capital, within the period of one year, by instalments in such sums and at such times as the wants of the State required, not exceeding in the whole the sum of \$3,000,000 at interest not exceeding 5 per cent., and the amount of the loan anticipated by this act was to be appropriated by the Legislature to the payment of the interest on the debt, and to such other purposes as the Legislature deemed proper. In accordance with that law the Legislature by an act approved June 11, 1840, appropriated money to all the various improvements then in progress in the State.

The banks were thus held up and invited to stand and deliver the money needed by the State, but instead of financial conditions improving they continued to grow worse and worse until the meeting of the Legislature in 1841, when the treasury was without means to pay the interest on the debt, public sentiment was highly inflamed against the cost of the improvements which the



people had imperiously demanded, and repudiation was very generally accepted solely on the assumption that increased taxation could not be borne, and that it was impossible for the great State of Pennsylvania to maintain her credit. There were strong advocates of repudiation in the Legislature. Fortunately Governor Porter stood resolutely in favor of maintaining the honor of the Commonwealth, and he was ably supported by such well-known Democratic leaders of that day as James X. McLanahan, then senator from Franklin, who made a heroic and masterly appeal for maintaining the honor of the State at any cost, and William F. Johnston, later Governor, and Hendrick B. Wright, were among the most active supporters of State credit, and Johnston was generally regarded as the author of the act that finally saved Pennsylvania from ineffaceable dishonor.

When the Legislature met there was intense anxiety in business circles, and especially in Philadelphia, to know the contents of Governor Porter's message. The magnetic telegraph was then unknown, and railroad speed rarely exceeded ten miles an hour, as all the railway lines were then constructed with wooden strips laid on the ties and little more than heavy strap iron spiked down upon the wood. The anxiety to get the message from Harrisburg to Philadelphia led to what was regarded as the greatest railroad achievement of that day. The best locomotive was selected, put in complete condition, and was fired up all ready to start when the message was delivered, and it was brought through to Philadelphia in five hours. It was heralded over the whole country as indicating most marvelous progress in railroad development that an engine could be run continuously for five hours at the rate of twenty miles an hour.

The tone of the message was all that the friends of



State faith could have desired. It did much to inspire those who were earnestly in favor of paying the State interest, and it halted many who were strongly inclined to fall in with the repudiation procession. The third act passed by the new Legislature provided for a loan of \$800,000 at a rate of interest not exceeding 6 per cent. "to be specifically appropriated to the interest on the public debt falling due on the 1st of February next." The Legislature had done its part in authorizing the loan, but \$3,000,000 of debt had accumulated in the face of all the various actions employed by the Legislature to force loans to the State. The 6 per cent. securities payable in coin, that was then the only legal tender, sold for little more than half their face value, and of course it was impossible to obtain the needed \$3,000,000 on any sound business basis. Banks had been tried by the previous Legislature by threats of forfeiture of charter to compel them to supply the treasury with needed money, but the measure failed, and it was not possible for the Legislature to attempt to enforce the penalty of forfeiture upon the banks which failed to resume in April, 1841, as a single bank in Pittsburg was the only one in the State that had not suspended, and its circulation was but limited. To have destroyed the banks by forfeiture of charter would have only multiplied misery and brought utter financial chaos.

The problem was finally solved by an elaborate act passed by the Legislature on the 30th of April, 1841, that was so violent in its disregard of all constitutional limitations that Governor Porter, although himself earnestly desiring to sustain the credit of the State, vetoed the bill. He vetoed it, however, with the full knowledge that it would be passed over his veto in both branches, and was doubtless quite willing that it should be done, as there was no other possible way of



providing means for the payment of State interest and the indebtedness for public improvements.

The State simply made use of all banks to furnish \$3,100,000 to the Treasury, and authorized the banks to issue in proportion to their capital, and in addition to their regular circulation, a special currency of denominations of one, two and five dollars, and only one-fourth to be of the highest denomination, for the redemption of which, in addition to the responsibility of the banks, the State pledged its faith, and these notes were made fiat money to the extent of being receivable for all dues to the Commonwealth and to the banks. They were commonly known as "relief notes," and on their face specially declared their distinctive quality. A number of the banks which issued these notes failed during the decade in which the relief notes were in circulation, and in case of a bank failure when the regular notes of the bank were worthless the relief notes passed as currency because the State was responsible for their redemption.

As the banks were utterly hopeless there was every reason why they should comply with this demand of the State and the State made it to their interest to do so by allowing them simply to manufacture money and loan it to the Commonwealth. As these relief notes were furnished to the State by the banks, they received certificates of indebtedness on which they were paid 1 per cent. interest, but they also received release from tax on stock and dividends, thus making it a most profitable operation for the banks.

This extraordinary measure by which a loan of \$3,100,000 was obtained for the State by simply manufacturing that amount of circulating notes through the medium of the banks saved the credit of Pennsylvania, and it was the only way by which the money could have been obtained. It was entirely without warrant



under the Constitution, and under all ordinary conditions would have been regarded as most reckless financial legislation, but it served the great purpose in view, and the repudiation feeling speedily died out, and even people who were most clamorous for repudiating the interest on the State debt were glad to learn that the honor of Pennsylvania had been preserved and without excessive taxation upon the people.

The money to pay the interest and other indebtedness of the State was really created out of nothing. The notes were printed, signed, made receivable for debts to the State and to the banks, and the faith of both the banks and the State was pledged for their ultimate redemption. Some of the unfinished public improvements were necessarily halted, but as soon as the financial condition improved they were speedily resumed, and the entire great network of canals was fully completed. The only additional source of revenue was an income tax provided for in the same bill taxing persons, trades and professions according to their revenues, and levying heavy taxes on merchants and other vendors, including liquor licenses. The same act appropriated \$3,100,000 to various indebtedness of the State and started it with a clean sheet. The fearful peril of repudiation had perished before the heroic efforts of Governor Porter and a few brave men in both parties, and no one took pause to inquire to what extent the limitations of the fundamental law had been invaded. It was enough to know that Pennsylvania had escaped a blistering stain upon her escutcheon, and it is only just to say that, but for the courage, patriotism and fidelity of David R. Porter, Pennsylvania would have been a colossal suicide in 1841.

Contrast the position of the State of Pennsylvania in 1841 with her position to-day. The population is now double that of the entire United States when the Re-



public was founded, and her annual revenue and balance in the State treasury to-day nearly equal the entire debt of the State in 1841 that brought us to the very verge of repudiation. We now appropriate more for public schools alone than was ever expended in any one year under our great internal improvement system of the olden times, and ten times as much as the entire revenues of the State three-quarters of a century ago. All this is accomplished with taxation wholly removed from real estate for State purposes, and the entire debt that was once nearly \$41,000,000 has been practically paid, the securities in the sinking fund being nearly sufficient to liquidate the last dollar of public debt. Such is the wonderful progress made in Pennsylvania since the cloud of repudiation was dispelled in 1841.



## VI.

## ADVENT OF THE WHIG PARTY.

Federalism and Anti-Masonry Having Perished, the Whig Party Had Its Birth in 1834—Senator James L. Gillis of Ridgway Tried for the Murder of Morgan—First Whig National Convention Held at Harrisburg in 1839—The Harrison Hard Cider and Log Cabin Contest—The First National Convention Ever Held Was by the Anti-Masons in 1830—The First Whig Triumph in 1840.

THE epoch that was inaugurated in Pennsylvania by the revolution of 1838 extended even to the creation of a new party that was destined to play a very important part in the politics of both State and nation. The battle for Ritner in 1838 was the last that was made by the Anti-Masons in Pennsylvania. That party was an accidental creation to meet the necessity of an opposition political organization. Federalism was practically eliminated from the political struggles of the country, and the way was open to crystallize a very widely diffused sentiment then cherished against all secret societies, and especially the Masonic fraternity. Archbishop Hughes, the ablest Catholic prelate this country has produced, had done much to prepare the public mind in New York for aggressive hostility to secret organizations, and he turned the scale in favor of the election of William H. Seward as Governor in 1838, the same year that Ritner was defeated. The party had then existed for a full decade, and Ritner was the candidate for Governor in four contests in which it was the only organized opposition to Democracy.

The Anti-Masonic party would probably never have reached its formidable proportions but for the fact that in 1826, just when its organization had been effected,



William Morgan, a citizen of western New York, mysteriously disappeared, and a very plausible circumstantial story was given to the public by the Anti-Masonic leaders that he had been murdered by the Masons in northwestern New York for having divulged the secrets of the order. A body in such advanced stage of decomposition as to make positive recognition impossible, was found some time afterward and declared to be the body of Morgan, although the identity was vigorously disputed. It was told of Thurlow Weed, the Anti-Masonic leader of New York, that when the identity of the Morgan body was discussed with him by some of his political friends, he said: "Well, it's a good enough Morgan for our purposes."

Intense personal and political bitterness was engendered by the discussion of the alleged killing of Morgan. Finally several prominent Masons were indicted for murder, and among them was James L. Gillis, who afterward attained considerable prominence in Pennsylvania politics. After having served creditably as a soldier in the second war with England and retiring with promotion, he located at Ridgway, then in the northwest wilderness of Jefferson County, and became the agent of the large Ridgway estate in that section owned by a prominent Philadelphia family. He served twice in the house of representatives, one term in the senate, and later one term in Congress. I became well acquainted with him when he was a member of the senate, where he was a universal favorite, and I more than once heard him tell the story of his long journey through an almost unbroken wilderness from Ridgway to New York to stand his trial for murder. He did not wait to be summoned by requisition, but when informed of the indictment he voluntarily threaded his way through the forests, requiring nearly a week's



journey, to appear before a jury of his peers where he was promptly acquitted as were his associates.

He carved out the new county of Elk, made Ridgway, his home, the county seat, and was for a full generation altogether the most influential citizen of that region. He was a man of imposing presence, heroic in every fibre, sternly honest and most delightful in companionship. I have heard him say that it was not an uncommon thing in the very early days to stand in front of his home in Ridgway and see the panther cross the road almost within gunshot of his house.

As the banner of Anti-Masonry had summoned the opposition to Democracy after the death of Federalism, so the Whig banner summoned the opposition after the death of Anti-Masonry in 1838. The Whig party had a straggling organization, beginning in 1834, and its national leaders, known as National Republicans, including some of the ablest men of the Senate, who had a final breach with Jackson, adopted the party name of Whig. Anti-Masonic candidates were nominated for a year or two after 1838, but they received only a few hundred votes. In December, 1839, the Whigs held the first National convention at Harrisburg to name national candidates for the contest of 1840, when Harrison and Tyler were elected, and thenceforth the Whig party absorbed the entire opposition to the Democracy that had been baptized by Jackson.

The new party, like the Anti-Masonic party that preceded it, had a brief career, but in that time it elected two Governors in Pennsylvania and two Presidents of the United States. In 1841 Governor Porter was re-elected over John Banks, the Whig candidate, by a majority of 23,000, but soon after he had entered upon his second term he became estranged from a considerable portion of the leaders of his party, and when he



retired, in 1845, he was not in full political fellowship with his old-time friends.

The Democratic Legislature of 1842 passed a congressional apportionment on the basis of the new census returns, but Porter vetoed it ostensibly on the ground of injustice to the majority party of the State, although it was a Democratic measure, but in point of fact he was incensed at the deliberate shaping of the new congressional districts to make it impossible for two special friends of the Governor—John Snyder, of Union, and A. Porter Wilson, of Huntingdon—to be elected to Congress.

The Legislature adjourned without passing another apportionment bill, and the Whigs held elections in some of the congressional districts in the fall of '42 in which but few Democrats participated, and no one even claimed a seat on the returns of that year. In the session of 1843 a new district apportionment was passed in which Snyder and Wilson were given Democratic districts, but the irony of fate made the strange sequel of both of them having been twice nominated and twice defeated in the districts specially fashioned for them. A full congressional delegation was elected in October, 1843, in ample time for the members to take their seats at the opening of the new Congress in December.

The revolution in favor of popular power steadily advanced until in 1843 the canal commissioners were made elective, and William B. Foster, Jesse Miller and James Clark were elected by about 15,000 majority. Foster's nomination and election was a thorn in the side of the men who had charge of our main line and other public improvements. The management of these works had become grossly corrupted, and especially on the portage road crossing the Alleghenies, where, as was proven on one occasion, it was at times common for a contractor furnishing wood for locomotives and engines



to take the same wood from station to station, and have it ranked, measured and paid for half a dozen times.

Foster was a man of great ability, but extremely quiet and unassuming in manner, and the men on our public works had very little conception of his character until he became the head of the canal board, as he was nominated and elected for the term of three years, with Miller for two years and Clark for one.

He had a desperate undertaking, as the State railroads and canals extended to almost every section of the State, and his two associates on the canal board were not at all inclined to revolutionary reform in what was deemed political interests of the State. He made no issue with any of his associates, but quietly and earnestly strove to inaugurate better administration in which he was measurably successful.

In 1846, when his successor was to be chosen, the leaders did not dare depose him, although many of the more audacious canal plunderers made a desperate battle for the nomination of Thomas J. Power, of Beaver, who was, however, defeated by a large vote. When the Whig convention met, there were several candidates named for the position, as it was believed that the Democrats would not give a hearty support to Foster, and it was finally deemed expedient to nominate James Power, brother of the defeated Democratic candidate, as the man who could command the dissatisfied Democratic vote which supported the brother of the Whig candidate.

The result was the defeat of Foster and the election of Power by a majority of about 9,000, and the new Whig canal commissioner united with one of his Democratic associates to give the patronage of the canal board almost wholly to the Democrats who had opposed Foster's nomination and election.

Mr. Foster's public services were so highly appreciated



by the best men of the State that he was, soon after his defeat for canal commissioner, called to the important position of first assistant engineer and later and then only vice-president of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, that had been chartered the same year that Foster had suffered his defeat. He rendered very great service to the struggling Pennsylvania corporation, but died a few years after he had assumed his new position. He was not in any sense a politician, had no taste for political management, and was resolutely averse to corruption either in politics or public trust, and his early death was profoundly lamented.

The political conditions of Pennsylvania were in a transition state when the reform Constitution of 1838 was adopted. The Anti-Masons had made their last rally for the re-election of Ritner, and they had the co-operation of a considerable number of Whigs who were unwilling to accept the organization and faith of the Anti-Masons. Among these were some high-class Masons of whom the late Joseph R. Chandler, one of the prominent Whig editors of the country, was recognized as the leader. A number of them published an address over their own signatures disavowing the Anti-Masonic features of the opposition to Democracy, and giving their reasons why they supported Ritner in preference to the Democratic candidate. In the national contest of 1836 Van Buren defeated Harrison in Pennsylvania by the small majority of 4,364, and Porter's majority over Ritner was only a thousand greater.

The reform Constitution was adopted by the slender majority of 1,212, out of a poll of 225,000, and the majorities given in the different counties indicated an utter disregard of partisan sentiment in voting for and against the measure. Adams County gave 300 votes for it and 4,420 against it; Armstrong gave 2,597 for it and 949 against it; Bradford gave 4,116 for it and



188 against it; Butler gave 2,383 for it, with 712 in the negative; Crawford gave 3,344 for it to 517 against it; Erie gave 3,175 for it, with 454 against it; Greene gave 2,399 for it and 74 against it; Lancaster gave 2,355 for it and 10,059 against it; Lebanon gave 807 for it and 2,503 against it; Somerset gave 556 for it and 2,029 against it; Susquehanna gave 2,085 for it to 412 against it, and Tioga gave 1,974 for it and 16 against it, while Union gave 452 for it to 3,185 against it, and York gave 1,233 for it and 5,500 against it. It will be seen that some of the strongest Anti-Masonic counties along with some of the strongest Democratic counties voted largely against the new Constitution.

The vital feature of the reform Constitution of 1838 was the resumption of power by the people in taking from the Executive nearly all his patronage, and making most offices elective. It was not a clean sweep, as it left associate judges, district attorneys and the important offices of auditor general and surveyor general to be appointed by the Executive, but the start made by the new fundamental law rapidly extended popular power until finally every office in the State, excepting the Governor's cabinet and some inspectors, who could not be made to represent any particular constituency, were made elective, including the judges themselves in 1851.

The new Whig party rapidly gathered into its fold all the elements of opposition to the Democracy, and the severe financial and industrial depression that began in 1837 and continued for four years, rapidly increased its numbers. In 1839 there was universal confidence among the leaders of the opposition to President Van Buren that he could be defeated in 1840 if the opposing elements could be united, and it was obvious to all that that union could be effected only under the Whig organization.



Pennsylvania was regarded as the battleground, and the Whigs, under the lead of such men as Josiah Randall, Joseph R. Chandler, Morton McMichael and others, and the Anti-Masons, under the lead of Stevens, Penrose and Burrowes, made earnest efforts to consolidate the opposition elements, and they succeeded in getting the Whig leaders of the country to unite in a call for a Whig National convention to be held at Harrisburg in December, 1839, nearly a full year before the Presidential election.

It was the first fully representative national political convention that had ever been held. The Anti-Masons held the first national convention in Philadelphia in 1830, two years before the Presidential election, but adjourned to meet later in Baltimore, when they nominated William Wirt for President and Amos Ellmaker for Vice-President. The Democrats followed in 1835, when they nominated Van Buren in the first Democratic National convention in Baltimore on the 20th of May, being a year and a half before the election, but the convention system was accepted with great reluctance by the Democrats, and while there were 600 delegates in attendance, more than half of them were from Maryland alone.

The meeting of the Whig National convention in this State in 1839 made Pennsylvania the central figure of the great political revolution that was about to be wrought. The greatest deliberation was displayed in selecting a candidate. The individual preference of a majority of the delegates was for Henry Clay, then the acknowledged leader of the opposition, but he was a Royal Arch Mason and that made him an impossible candidate, as a very large portion of the opposition elements was made up of men who had been desperately fighting Masonry for a full decade.

Harrison had been both a soldier and Senator, hero



and statesman, and Stevens, who was one of the active factors of the convention, won out in the nomination of Harrison, only to be denied a promised seat in the cabinet after Harrison became President. The battle in Pennsylvania was a roysterer滚licking affair on the part of the Whigs with the Democrats on the defensive at every point, and Harrison carried the State by a majority of 349, as was ascertained some three weeks after the election.

The very small majority by which Harrison won in Pennsylvania clearly indicated that while the State was not for Van Buren it could not be classed as a Whig State, as was demonstrated by Democratic success over the Whigs in every contest during the existence of the Whig party, with the exception of 1846 and 1848, when Democratic divisions gave the Whigs the victory.



## VII.

## ASA PACKER AND DAVID THOMAS.

Thomas, a Welsh Miner, Settled in the Lehigh Region and the First Man to Manufacture Anthracite Iron—His Great Lead in the Iron Development of Pennsylvania—Known and Revered as “Pap” Thomas until he Died at the Age of Eighty-eight—Packer Developed the Transportation System of the Lehigh Valley—A Journeyman Carpenter, he Became the most Successful and Richest of our Railway Presidents in his Day—Packer's Gubernatorial Contest of 1869—His Defeat by a Small Majority, and by his Friends it was Charged to Fraud.

FROM 1840 to 1844 there was nothing specially eventful in the political records of Pennsylvania. Porter's re-election in 1841 by a very large majority established the ascendancy of the Democrats of the State, and the Whigs made no vital effort to win until 1844, when they followed the tall plume of Henry Clay with a devotion entirely unexampled in the history of American politics, and thousands of them shed scalding tears over his defeat, but a new industrial era was suddenly developed by the successful manufacture of iron with anthracite coal.

There had been a great struggle to introduce anthracite coal for domestic purposes, but most of those who first attempted it abandoned it in despair. The prejudices against it gradually disappeared as the people came to understand how to use it to obtain the best results, and when it was finally demonstrated, after many unsuccessful experiments, that iron could be made with hard coal the Lehigh region received a wonderful impetus, and speedily developed the countless millions of wealth which have been poured out of that section during the last half century.



This development was largely due to two men, one of whom mastered the production of anthracite iron and the other mastered the question of the wealth of the Lehigh reaching the markets of the country. These men were David Thomas and Asa Packer.

David Thomas, for many years known in the Lehigh region only as "Pap" Thomas, was born in Wales, November 3, 1794, and died in Catasauqua at the ripe age of 88 years, with his home surrounded by matchless monuments of his genius in the great iron establishments of the Crane and Catasauqua corporations.

It was my fortune to be his guest in 1860, when I was in charge of the Lincoln campaign in Pennsylvania, and spent a most delightful and instructive night with him. He was then approaching the patriarchal age, and was actively engaged in the direction of his great enterprises. He was a man of fine presence, with his unusual natural forces polished and ripened by study and experience rather than by education in the schools, and he was so unassuming and modest in all things relating to himself that it was somewhat difficult to get from him the inner story of his life.

He was then the most widely known and certainly one of the most beloved of all the men in the Lehigh region, and his home was a sanctuary of generous hospitality.

He had experience in Wales in his early life as a miner and as a worker in iron establishments. He emigrated to this country in 1839, when just in the full vigor of middle life, and located in the heart of the iron region of the Lehigh Valley. He gave exhaustive study to everything relating to the manufacture of iron, and he soon became satisfied that anthracite coal could be successfully employed for the manufacture of iron. When it became known in the Lehigh region that he was experimenting with a view to manufacturing



anthracite iron as a commercial enterprise, he was roundly ridiculed by all his neighbors. He told me that he had many discussions on the subject with his family physician, who was one of the most intelligent men of the neighborhood, and he made exhaustive efforts to induce Mr. Thomas to abandon what the doctor regarded as an utterly unpromising phantom.

Just before Mr. Thomas had completed his experimental works which succeeded in establishing the feasibility of producing anthracite iron as a commercial success, he expressed to his doctor his entire confidence in the theory, to which the doctor curtly answered: "I will obligate myself to eat all the iron you make with anthracite coal."

When he had thoroughly mastered the method of producing anthracite iron, and it became understood that it would be manufactured with much greater profit than charcoal iron, he was able to command any amount of capital he needed, and began by building the furnaces which developed into the great Lehigh Crane Iron Company. He conducted these furnaces for nearly a decade when he withdrew from the Crane Company, and with the several sons who had grown up, and a few other friends, he organized the Thomas Iron Company, that for many years was known as not only the largest but the most successful of the iron establishments in Pennsylvania.

In addition to the Thomas Company, which he largely owned, he became connected with the Catasauqua Manufacturing Company, and established one of the largest rolling mills in the State. He proved himself altogether the most capable iron man in the country, and his furnaces and mills were regarded by all as models in method and management. It was his genius that added the powerful blowing engine to the working of blast furnaces which added immensely to their



producing capacity and the reduction of the cost of iron.

He was a very close observer of iron interests in every part of the country and of the world, and his judgment was next to infallible when he had studied any problem relating to that great industry and reached his conclusion. A few years before his death he saw that the iron interests of Pennsylvania must at no very distant day meet with very dangerous competition from the iron centers of the South. He and Asa Packer visited Birmingham and other iron centers in Alabama when the iron business there was in its infancy, and he was so fully convinced of the probability of the cheaper production of iron in Alabama that he invested in iron lands, not with a view of developing them himself, for he had then passed the period of active business life, but because he believed that his sons and other successors would eventually turn to the sunny South as the most promising of the iron fields of the country.

He was not mistaken in his judgment, for to-day Birmingham produces iron cheaper than it can be produced any place in this country or in any other country of the world, and the great iron establishments which stood as the crowning monuments to Mr. Thomas' genius at the time of his death have passed their season of prosperity and are no longer pointed to as among the most successful iron enterprises of the New World. He died at his home in Catasauqua on the 20th of June, 1882, and was more widely lamented than any other citizen of the Lehigh Valley.

Asa Packer was born at Croton, Conn., December 29, 1806, and received only the very ordinary rural school education of that time. When sixteen years of age he journeyed westward to Susquehanna County, many of whose residents were from "the land of steady



habits," and his entire worldly possessions were tied up in a bandanna handkerchief.

He first apprenticed himself to learn the carpenter's trade, but he was a close and intelligent observer, tireless in industry, and he was among the first to appreciate the possibilities in developing the wealth of the iron and coal of that region. In 1832 he settled at Mauch Chunk, and soon became interested in the development of coal lands, and that necessarily led to the development of means for getting the coal to market. Early in the fifties he conceived the scheme of constructing the Lehigh Valley Railroad, and he devoted many years of the most exhaustive labor, and often under the severest possible strain, to consummate that great enterprise.

I remember meeting him many times at the Merchants' Hotel, Philadelphia, after the financial revulsion of 1857, when he was harassed almost beyond endurance by the difficulties he encountered in maintaining the credit to prosecute his pet enterprises.

Few men could have maintained the contest as he did under the severest discouragements, but he was resolute in purpose, and I heard him even in the darkest days of his financial troubles predict that the Lehigh Valley Railroad, when completed, and its resources under fair development, would be the most successful railroad enterprise in the State, and he lived to see the fulfilment of even his wildest dreams. For fully a quarter of a century the Lehigh Valley Railroad stood first among all the railroads of this State in point of credit. It was regarded as the one railroad enterprise that must ever maintain a high measure of prosperity.

I met Mr. Packer frequently before I became a resident of Philadelphia, and thereafter I spent many evenings with him at his home on Spruce Street, above Ninth. He was a man of excellent presence, with a



finely chiseled face that was almost a stranger to visible emotion, and he was severely quiet and unassuming in conversation. He and his devoted wife, who had married the carpenter of the Lehigh Valley, never changed their simple tastes when they had millions to expend for luxuries. She continued to the end of her days to knit her stockings, to fashion many of her own garments, and it was with great difficulty that she could be persuaded to ride in her own carriage. They both loved the quiet of their home and were sternly severe to ostentatious display.

He had been somewhat in politics, but it was not to his taste. Political honors were thrust upon him rather than sought by him. He served in the Legislature, was twice elected to Congress, and in 1868 had the unanimous vote of Pennsylvania for the Democratic nomination for President. In 1869, without seeking or desiring it, he was nominated as the Democratic candidate for Governor against Governor Geary, then a candidate for re-election. Philadelphia elections were then run quite as recklessly as they are now, and a vigorous and powerful Democratic organization was maintained with variations in ballot corrupting methods quite equal to those of the Republicans.

The majority returned for Geary over Packer in the State was 4,596, and more than that majority had been given to Geary in Philadelphia. Packer's friends believed, and they certainly had plausible grounds for the belief, that their candidate had carried a majority in the city of Philadelphia. Geary was at variance with a considerable element of his own party. A sensational contest in which Mr. Diamond, the Democratic candidate for senator, contested the seat of Mr. Watts, who was returned as elected, exhibited the most flagrant frauds by changing returns even after they had been computed and certified, but the partisan majority





Asa Packer



of the senate sustained the candidate in political sympathy with it, and the Legislature being largely Republican, a contest by Packer for the gubernatorial chair was regarded as utterly hopeless.

It was a common thing in those days for leading Republican politicians of both parties to gather at the Girard House, and Room No. 42, one of the largest in the house, was a political rendezvous almost every day, and especially on Sunday. I was a frequent visitor at these meetings of Republican leaders, and had very pleasant personal relations with most of them, although not regarded as soundly in sympathy with their methods.

On the Sunday after the first week of the new Legislature that had organized and received the Governor's message I happened to stop in at the Girard House to see many members of the Legislature from different parts of the State who were there, and finally called at No. 42, where I found ex-Treasurer Kemble and State Treasurer Mackey, with John L. Hill and Sheriff Elliott. The table was covered with papers on which there had been elaborate figuring, and I inquired what it meant. Kemble, who was vastly more frank than discreet, blurted right out that Geary in his message had insisted upon taking the \$3,000,000 or \$4,000,000 of surplus in the Treasury and appropriating it to the public debt, which would have made the office of treasurer valueless, reduced Mackey to the starvation point, and deprived Kemble and his bank of large profits.

Kemble said that "Geary didn't know any better and supposed that he was really elected Governor, when in point of fact he wasn't, and we have just been figuring over the Philadelphia situation to ascertain whether the abundant facts we have could defeat him in a contest without sending a lot of our own people to the penitentiary."



The flood-gate had been opened by Kemble and all of them expressed themselves as most desirous of putting Geary out. They knew how he had been elected, and they assumed that he had given them a very poor return for the risks they had taken to secure his success. It was finally decided that the developments of the contest would be quite as dangerous to them and their friends as to Geary, and it was abandoned.

I have no personal knowledge of the facts as to the election of that year, but I simply state that the men who were there in consultation all declared, and I do not doubt believed, that Packer was elected Governor of the State.

Packer was a man of unflagging energy. He had no taste for society; indeed all formal social duties were extremely irksome to him. His greatest pleasure was to have three friends join him in the evening at his Philadelphia residence, play euchre until about half past ten, and then join him in a drink of good old rye and adjourn. I frequently tarried with him at his own request after others had gone, and heard him talk when his heart was on his sleeve. He then regarded himself as worth about \$14,000,000 and I never knew a man to agonize as he did about the peril of large fortune to a family. He feared that his many millions would unfit his children for usefulness and true enjoyment of life, and it was this apprehension that made him entail his entire estate at the death of his children without issue to the Lehigh University.

After his death his two sons were not long in following him across the dark river, and both died childless. One daughter had married an estimable gentleman, and specific bequests were made to her and her children, leaving them without interest in the residuary estate, and the other daughter, married some years after his



death, is also childless and is now well advanced in years, so that the last of the Packer estate must soon at the latest revert to his favorite university.

Fortunately Packer passed away before financial reverses overtook his great railroad organization, and it is now, like the great iron monuments erected by "Pap" Thomas to which he pointed with such pride until the day of his death, one of the broken reeds of our great network of railroads. He died in Philadelphia on the 17th of May, 1879. He and Thomas lived to see as the fruits of their efforts the wonderful transformation in the Lehigh region that poured its matchless wealth into the marts of commerce and trade, and both joined the great majority beyond before the shadows of misfortune had clouded their great life's work.



## VIII.

## THE POLK-CLAY CONTEST OF 1844.

Democrats Rejected Van Buren After a Long Struggle—Nominated the First Dark Horse for the Presidency in James K. Polk—Clay Nominated Unanimously by a Convention and Party That Idolized Him—Pennsylvania Was the Pivotal State—The Death of Muhlenberg, the Democratic Candidate for Governor, United the Democratic Factions on Shunk and Defeated Markle, the Whig Candidate, by a Small Majority—The Birth of the Native American Movements—Lewis C. Levin and His Career.

THE Presidential contest of 1844 is memorable with the great mass of intelligent American people as the struggle in which Henry Clay, the most brilliant of all the great men of his day, and certainly the most beloved of any popular leader in the history of American politics, was defeated by James K. Polk; but its chief importance in shaping the destiny of political parties, and of the Republic as well, is not well understood. The nomination of Polk is generally regarded as an accident, as he was the first "dark horse" who succeeded in obtaining a Presidential nomination, but his selection was in no degree accidental, as it was most deliberately planned, in which the Virginia Democratic leaders, then the ablest of the South, were important factors. Nor was the nomination of Polk conceived and executed simply to defeat Van Buren or any other candidate, or to advance any personal favorite. It was carefully planned to inaugurate a new but unavowed policy of the Democratic party to nationalize the issue of slavery extension.

Van Buren had been defeated in 1840 by a large majority, but the general conviction of the Democratic





*David Thomas*



people regarded him as entitled to be made the candidate in 1844 to retrieve the disaster he suffered in the tidal wave of business and industrial despondency of 1840. There were many who regarded him as unavailable, but the majority of his Democratic supporters looked upon his election as reasonably certain if again made the candidate of the party. The opposition to his renomination was not, as a rule, openly declared. There were murmurs here and there against Van Buren, but the important work that accomplished this overthrow was subtle, searching and earnestly directed.

The advocates of slavery extension saw that the time had come when they must strengthen themselves by some very important advancement in their cause, or finally surrender the contest for the maintenance of the institution; and their purpose, as very carefully considered and decided upon, was to force the annexation of Texas, a slave republic, with the right of division into four additional States, and to follow that by the acquisition of additional slave territory from Mexico.

The year 1844 and its Presidential battle, therefore, inaugurated the policy of nationalizing slavery extension, and it thereby dated the decline and fall of the Democratic party that had ruled the nation, practically without interruption, since the triumph of Jefferson in 1800.

Van Buren was not in sympathy with this policy and a short time before the meeting of the National convention he published a letter declaring distinctly against the annexation of Texas. He was one of the shrewdest political leaders and he saw that if the annexation policy ruled the National convention he must not only be defeated, but he must be retired as a leading factor in the national Democracy. The convention had a clear majority of delegates pledged or instructed for Van



Buren, but the real test of Van Buren's strength in the convention was on the question of adopting the two-thirds rule, which was carried by 148 to 118. Every supporter of Van Buren knew that while he had a majority of the delegates he could not under any circumstances command a two-thirds vote, and every vote cast for the adoption of the two-thirds rule by a professed friend of Van Buren was simply a deliberate stab at his own candidate.

On the first ballot Van Buren received 146 votes to 120 for all others, and Polk did not receive a single vote until the eighth ballot, when Virginia, the "Mother of Presidents," pointed the way to the dark horse, and he received 44 votes, with Van Buren dropping to 104. On the ninth ballot Polk received the entire vote of the convention with the exception of 2 for Van Buren and 29 for Cass.

While the great mass of the Democratic people did not understand the real purpose of Polk's nomination, Van Buren was in no measure deceived, and he and his friends hesitated long before they finally agreed to give their support to Polk under satisfactory conditions relating to their recognition by the party. Polk openly declared for the annexation of Texas, and Clay, knowing that the annexation cause was very strong in the South, declared against the immediate annexation of Texas without the consent of Mexico, as otherwise it would inevitably involve us in war. There were thus two great issues involved in the Polk-Clay contest of 1844—first, the issue of protection to our industries by maintaining the tariff of 1842, or a return to a revenue tariff, and, second, the nationalization of the policy of slavery extension.

Pennsylvania was the arbiter in the great trial of 1844 and decided in favor of nationalizing a slave extension policy and going back to a revenue tariff.



On the final result the transfer of the electoral vote of Pennsylvania from Polk to Clay left Polk a small majority in the Electoral College, but the October contest for Governor in this State was as decisive in determining the defeat of Clay as was the battle of Gettysburg in deciding the fate of the Confederacy, and all parties well understood that the vote of Pennsylvania in October would unerringly indicate the successful candidate for President. Pennsylvania was the key-stone of the Federal arch and no President had ever been chosen by the Electoral College against the vote of Pennsylvania. Adams had been elected by the House when Pennsylvania gave Jackson a large majority, but no President was ever chosen in the Electoral College against the vote of Pennsylvania until the triumph of Cleveland in 1884. New York was an equally important State, but did not choose State officers until November, so that it was not a fingerboard for the final judgment on the Presidency.

The leaders of both sides realized the vital importance of the contest in this State, and I well remember how earnestly and desperately it was contested. I was a boy not more than half way through the teens, but I was living in the political center of the mountain forests of my native county, and cherished a devotion for Clay that has never been repeated in all the many political struggles I have seen. The supporters of Clay as a rule literally worshiped him. He was their idol, their political deity, and they believed him to be the noblest, the grandest, the ablest and the most chivalrous of men, while his opponents met him with a tempest of defamation, publicly charging him on the hustings and through every newspaper opposed to him as a gambler, a libertine, a horse racer, a Sabbath breaker and a murderer. The Whigs responded by



charging Polk with disgraceful littleness, studied hypocrisy and the offspring of a traitor.

In no national contest before or since did the people so nearly universally participate in the work of the campaign. The Whigs and Democrats of every community were ready to respond to the drum-beat that called them to assemble, and no man's defeat in the entire history of American politics brought anything approaching the agonizing sorrow that was felt by the friends of Clay when Polk's election was finally accepted.

The Democrats were not in a fortunate position to strengthen themselves for a State contest for Governor. Muhlenberg, who had run as a bolting candidate against Wolf in 1835, and thus elected Ritner, was very strong in the State, and there was a desperate struggle between his friends and the friends of Francis R. Shunk for the nomination, but Muhlenberg finally triumphed, leaving a very wide feeling of unrest and distrust throughout the party. Only nine years before he had defeated the regular Democratic candidate for Governor by running against him, and that certainly would have weakened him to an extent far beyond the small majority that was finally given to Shunk. In the very heat of the campaign the sudden death of Muhlenberg was announced, and it relieved the Democrats of the chief peril that confronted them, as Shunk was then nominated by a practically unanimous vote, and with his clean political record and high personal character there was no reason why the Democrats should not support him.

The Whigs chose General Markle as their leader, a gallant soldier of the War of 1812, and a man who commanded the enthusiastic support of his party. He was not a politician, but was all the stronger because he was called from his farm in Westmoreland to lead the Whigs in their greatest conflict. There have been many



intense and earnest political struggles both before and since 1844, but there was no contest in which the whole people of the State were so directly face to face and man to man as they were in the struggle for the election of Shunk or Markle as Governor, but Shunk was elected by a majority of 4,397, and that was decisive against the success of Clay.

Hopeless as the battle was, the Whigs followed their great leader through a struggle of another month, but Polk carried the State in November by 6,332. Had Pennsylvania elected Markle in October it would have assured the success of Clay in Pennsylvania by an increased majority, and Polk's small November majority of 5,106 in New York would undoubtedly have been reversed in favor of Clay.

The contest of 1844 developed an entirely new political factor in Pennsylvania, although it was confined almost entirely to the city of Philadelphia, and it was not felt as an organized body in the contest for Governor or President. A brilliant adventurer named Lewis C. Levin, a native of Charleston, S. C., and a peripatetic law practitioner, first in South Carolina, next in Maryland, next in Louisiana, next in Kentucky and finally in Pennsylvania, was the acknowledged leader of the Native American element that had erupted during the summer of 1844 in what is remembered as the disgraceful riots of that year in which Catholic churches and institutions were burnt by the mob. He, with other less able and conspicuous associates, led the Native Americans to their bloody and destructive demonstrations, and he became their candidate for Congress against Thomas B. Florence, the old war-horse of the wharf section of the city.

He was one of the most brilliant and unscrupulous orators I have ever heard. He presented a fine appearance, graceful in every action, charming in rhetoric



and utterly reckless in assertion. I have heard him both as a temperance and political orator, and I doubt whether during his day any person in either party of the State surpassed him on the hustings. He was elected by a good majority and was re-elected in 1846 and '48, thus serving six consecutive years as a representative from the city.

After his third election the leaders were unable to hold the majority in Levin's district, but they had become a compact political organization in the city and for some years thereafter they held the balance of power, and by combination with the Whigs gained a number of important local victories. Colonel Wallace, editor of the "Sun," the Native American organ of the city, one of the most genial and delightful men I have ever met and one who justly deserved the appellation of the "handsome editor" that was generally accorded to him, was a very important leader of the Native organization, and when the Whigs came into power by the election of Taylor in 1848 he was rewarded with a comfortable and well-paying position in the Custom House.

It was through this organization that William B. Reed, one of the most accomplished men and one of the ablest members of the bar of Philadelphia, attained his political mastery. He was the accepted leader of the Whig party and he was absolutely autocratic in his leadership when he once defined his plans and purposes. He was twice elected district attorney by a combination with the Natives that he most adroitly managed.

It was this Native element that gave the Whigs practically the control of the Legislature in 1849, when James Cooper was elected United States Senator, and it was this remnant of the once powerful Native organization that placed the late Judge Allison on the



bench. The Whigs kept in such close relations with the Native Americans that they nearly always fused on local tickets. In 1851, when the judges were first elected, it was arranged that the Democrats, the Whigs and the Natives should each name a candidate for the common pleas court and that they should be supported as an independent judicial ticket. The Whigs named Thompson, the Democrats named Kelly, both then on the bench, and the Natives named Allison, who was then a young lawyer in the Northern Liberties district, and a leader of the Native element. He was accepted with much reluctance, but as the Natives were resolute in adhering to him he was finally accepted, although with grave apprehensions as to his fitness for the position.

The Independent ticket was elected and Allison continued on the bench until his death, and no one of his associates during his judicial term of service was more widely or sincerely respected by the bar and the public. This Native organization was maintained, although steadily depleting in numbers, until it was galvanized into new life and huge proportions by the advent of the Know Nothings in 1854.



## IX.

## CAMERON ELECTED SENATOR.

Buchanan Appointed Secretary of State in 1845 and Cameron Elected to Succeed Him for Four Years in the Senate—By a Combination of Protection or Cameron Democrats with the Whigs Cameron Defeated Woodward, the Democratic Candidate—Cameron's Ability as a Political Strategist—Cameron as a Democratic Senator—A Thorn in the Side of the Buchanan Administration—He Rejects Judge Woodward for Judge of the Supreme Court.

THE election of Polk in 1844 brought Simon Cameron to the surface as one of the political leaders of the State. He gave lukewarm support to Polk, although all his affiliations had been Democratic. Rising from his printer's case in his native county of Lancaster, he had attained prominence as a newspaper publisher in Doylestown and Harrisburg, had been appointed to the office of adjutant general by Governor Schultz, and his shrewd and broad business instincts had given him wealth, and made him practical manager and chief proprietor of the Middletown Bank. He had large iron interests for that day, and his reluctance in the support of Polk was because of his apprehension that the protective tariff of 1842 would be overthrown by the success of the Democratic candidate. He was naturally anti-slavery, and thus, on the two great questions which were at issue in the struggle, Cameron was not in hearty accord with his party, although he made no ostentatious proclamation of his faith. He was the recognized leader of a faction within the Democratic party that usually managed to control the canal board and the political plunder of the State,



and his political methods were generally regarded as offensive by the Whigs, and made him distrusted by a large portion of his Democratic associates.

Senator Buchanan was called to the cabinet of Polk as premier of the new administration, and his resignation from the Senate left a vacancy for an unexpired term of four years to be filled by the Legislature. The Democrats had a moderate majority in both the senate and house, and it was not doubted that any candidate upon whom the Democratic caucus united would be chosen. The Democratic party of that day had a very able and generally respected leadership, and its high places went to the soaring eagles rather than to the mousing owls, as has since been many times common in Democratic management of both city and State. There were a number of prominent candidates for the senatorship to succeed the ablest representative of the party, as Buchanan was then acknowledged, and the leaders naturally sought for the man who would stand abreast with the great men of the first legislative tribunal of the nation.

This purpose, and this alone, led to the nomination of George W. Woodward. He was then only thirty-four years of age and entirely untrained in political management. He would not have known how to conduct a campaign to elevate himself to the Senate, but the Democratic leaders did not err in choosing him as the man who could most nearly maintain the high honors won for the State by Senator Buchanan. He was a man of most commanding presence; six feet three in height, with a face of unusual beauty and strength, superb physical proportions throughout, and all the graces of a cultured gentleman. No man in the State had a cleaner record. He was born at Bethany, Pa., March 26, 1809, and after receiving an academic education studied law, and was admitted



to the bar in Wilkes-Barre, where he practised until 1841, when he was appointed judge of the Centre judicial district.

He had also been a member of the constitutional convention of 1837-8, where he had distinguished himself as an able disputant and an intelligent counselor, and when he was nominated for Senator to succeed Buchanan, his friends in the Legislature and throughout the State pointed to him with pride as the future leader of the Pennsylvania Democracy.

When the nomination was made for Senator there did not seem to be a ripple on the political surface, and his election was regarded as absolutely certain, but Cameron saw his opportunity and he alone shrewdly understood it. He and the Democrats in sympathy with him, wielding the political power of the canal board, were tireless and adroit in controlling the local Democratic nominations where it was possible to do so without unfurling their factional flag, and every Legislature of those days contained a number of senators and representatives who were in more or less open accord with Cameron and his associates. He had more than enough in the Legislature of '45 to hold the balance of power between the Democrats and the Whigs, and he conceived and successfully executed the plan of uniting the Cameron Democrats and the Whigs to elect himself to the Senate.

When it was first proposed by Cameron and his friends it was regarded as an utterly hopeless movement, as the Whigs as a party were specially at war with the more profligate element of the Democracy of which Cameron was the confessed leader. The Democratic leaders were entirely in the dark as to the number of Democrats Cameron could control, as his ablest and most effective lieutenants in the Legislature rarely uncovered their devotion to Cameron



to avoid losing prestige with the regular organization. When Cameron's strength was finally mustered for roll call it appalled the Democratic managers. It was an absolute necessity to have more than enough Democrats openly in line for Cameron to enable him to negotiate with the Whigs, and it soon became evident to all that he had the Democrats sufficiently divided to secure his own election if he could command the entire Whig vote.

At first the Whigs seemed quite unpromising, as they were rather less in sympathy with the Cameron element of the Democracy than with the regular Democratic organization, but they were environed by peculiar conditions and pressing necessities, and a formidable element in the Whig party was soon crystallized to advocate the election of Cameron. Personal considerations and prejudices were largely dwarfed by the peculiar and vital issues which confronted them. The national campaign of 1844 in Pennsylvania was conducted by the Democrats on the theory that the protective tariff of 1842 would not be disturbed. A very shrewdly framed letter was obtained from Mr. Polk, the Democratic candidate for President, addressed to Judge Kane, of Philadelphia, from which it was entirely plausible to assume that the protective policy would not be overthrown. There was no positive declaration on the subject, but its important statement was in the single sentence that declared in favor of a permanent tariff policy to give stability to the business and industrial interests of the country.

This was claimed by the supporters of the tariff of 1842 as a specific assurance that Polk, if elected President, would not change the tariff policy of the country. Of course, many of the leaders knew better, but they also knew that if the people of Pennsylvania



believed that the defeat of Clay would overthrow the tariff of 1842, Polk could not carry the State. The Democrats marched in procession in many sections of Pennsylvania under banners inscribed with "Polk, Dallas, Shunk and the tariff of 1842," and Judge Myers, of Clarion, one of the prominent Democrats of that portion of the State, and a large iron-master, had a flag floating from his works bearing the inscription just quoted. After the repeal of the protective tariff and the substitution of the revenue tariff of 1846, Judge Myers resented the betrayal, ran successfully as an Independent Democrat against the regular Democratic candidate for senator, and thereafter acted with the Whig party that made him its candidate for surveyor general in 1853.

Two months had elapsed between the Presidential election and the election of a United States Senator at Harrisburg. In that period the Democratic leaders of the country generally, and even in Pennsylvania, had unmasked on the tariff question, and a revenue tariff was the accepted and proclaimed policy of the party. This condition produced great alarm among the Whigs of the State, as well as among the protection Democrats, and they felt that it was their paramount duty to prevent the repeal of the tariff of 1842. Judge Woodward was too honest to mislead his party on the subject. He was heartily in accord with the proclaimed purpose of the Democratic national leaders to overthrow the protective system, while Cameron was undoubtedly sincere in his devotion to protection, as probably his largest interests were at that time in the manufacture of iron.

On what the Whigs regarded as the most vital issue involved in the election of Senator, Cameron was undoubtedly in sympathy with them, and could be trusted to maintain his individual interests which





Simon Cameron



were in harmony with the general interests of the State. The Whigs believed the slavery question was not so vital, although there was much apprehension felt by them at the assured annexation of Texas, as the proposition was pending in Congress. By the terms of the Texas annexation measure that State was given the absolute right to be divided into four new States, making ten new Southern Senators to promote the interests of slavery and to oppose the interests of free industries. The bill had not yet passed Congress, but it was finally successful in both branches, and it was approved by President Tyler two days before he retired from the Presidency.

Cameron was open in his professions of hostility to slavery extension, and I doubt not that he was sincere, as his subsequent career proved. Thus on the two questions which were regarded as the supreme issues involved in the selection of a Senator, Cameron was regarded as very heartily and aggressively in accord with the Whigs in favor of a protective policy and sentimentally, at least, in harmony with them in opposition to the extension of the slave power. The Whigs were smarting under the defeat of Clay, the most idolized leader of American history. They were entirely united in the belief that the State had been wrested from them and from Clay by a deliberately conceived and executed fraud on the tariff question and they were quite ready to avenge their wrongs in any way that promised success. Thus, while the Whigs at first blush resented Cameron's candidacy, they finally saw that it was the only opportunity presented to them to save the policy of protection, and all but a dozen or so were speedily enlisted in the Cameron combination, but the dissenting dozen or so were obstinate and some of them apparently implacable.



One of the notable features of the contest was that the Harrisburg ministers were generally in favor of Cameron, as he was a liberal supporter of churches, regardless of creeds, and some of them were very actively enlisted in his cause. Men from different sections of the State were sent for by express messengers and hurried to the capital to remove the prejudices of those who stood out against the combination, and finally all were gathered in with the exception of Jasper E. Brady, of Franklin, an old Scotch-Irish Whig, who was defiant in his hostility to Cameron's political methods. Presbyterian ministers were summoned to beset him and finally with tears streaming down his cheeks he yielded his own views to the demand of the united Whigs of the Legislature. The result was Cameron's election to the Senate by a clear majority on the first ballot, and thus came into public life in Pennsylvania a man whose career is entirely unexampled in the history of the Commonwealth. From the time he became a United States Senator in 1845 until his death, nearly half a century later, there is not an important complete chapter of political history in the State that can be written with the omission of his defeats or triumphs, and even after his death until the present time no important chapter of political history can be fully written without recognizing his successors and assigns in politics as leading or controlling factors.

Cameron entered the Senate on the 4th of March, 1845, with an unfriendly environment. President Polk and Secretary of State Buchanan were both greatly disappointed and discomfited by his election, and neither the Whigs nor the Democrats of the body could accept him in full fellowship, but he proved to be a most valuable friend and most dangerous enemy. At an early period of his service, and during the entire



four years of his term, he was recognized as an important factor alike in politics and legislation. The Democrats of the State appealed to the President as did his Secretary of State, Mr. Buchanan, to vindicate Judge Woodward by his appointment to a vacancy on the Supreme Court of the United States. The Senate was Democratic by a narrow majority and it was not doubted that Woodward could be confirmed. The President nominated Woodward, but Cameron proved his omnipotence in the body by accomplishing the rejection of Woodward. It was a defiant answer to the President and to Secretary Buchanan and a cruel blow to Woodward, who, if he had been called to the supreme bench, would doubtless have made a most lustrous national judicial career, but Cameron, while doubtless gratifying a personal resentment, assumed that Woodward would be a dangerous judge of the political questions which must sooner or later demand judicial solution, and when Judge Greer was finally proposed for the place, Cameron heartily supported his confirmation.

Cameron made the Whigs think more kindly of him by the only important speech he made during his four sessions of service in the Senate. It was in 1846, when the tariff of that year, by which the protective policy of the State was overthrown, was on final passage before the Senate, having already passed the House, where all revenue measures must originate. After considerable discussion and a careful lining up on both sides of the Senate, it was discovered that an equal number of Senators favored and opposed the new tariff bill. George M. Dallas, of Pennsylvania, was the Vice-President and presiding officer of the body, and just a short time before the vote was taken, Cameron arose and made a personal appeal to the Vice-President as a Pennsylvanian to save his State and its



great interests by giving his casting vote against the new tariff bill. It was a plain, practical, earnest appeal, brief, but fervent and incisive, and the response of Dallas was the passage of the bill by his casting vote after the Senate had been declared a tie.

Such was the beginning of Cameron's public career, and thereafter his life was one of perpetual political struggle. He was felt more or less as a power in every important contest. He was a candidate for re-election in 1849, but neither party would accept him, and the Whigs, with the aid of the Native Americans, elected James Cooper. He was again a candidate as an American or Know Nothing in 1855, but was defeated after a wrangle that exhausted the session without electing a Senator. In 1857 he defeated Forney in a Democratic Legislature by the votes of Lebo, Maneer and Wagonseller, three Democratic members. In 1863 he was again a candidate, when Buckalew triumphed by a single vote. In 1867 he was again elected after a desperate contest, and in 1872 was re-elected, practically without a struggle. He served until 1877, when he resigned to give the place to his son, J. Donald Cameron, each of whom was four times elected to the United States Senate by the Pennsylvania Legislature.



## X.

## GEORGE M. DALLAS.

Nominated for Vice-President with Polk in 1844 after Senator Silas Wright Had Been Nominated and Declined—Had No Knowledge of the Honor Until a Delegation from the Baltimore Convention Made Him a Midnight Visit—His Casting Vote in Favor of the Tariff of 1846—Thrice a Candidate for President Against Buchanan—Bitter Factional Feuds Between Buchanan and Dallas—Many Pennsylvania Presidential Candidates.

THE national election of 1844 brought to the front in Pennsylvania a new and important factor in the Democratic politics of the State in the person of George Mifflin Dallas. He had attained national prominence long before that period, but he was practically unfelt in the management of the party. He was an able, accomplished and courtly gentleman, who had little taste for the rough and tumble involved in the struggle for political mastery.

He was born in Philadelphia in 1792, graduated at Princeton and was admitted to the bar in 1813. Soon thereafter he accompanied Albert Gallatin, as his secretary, to the court of Russia, and later became an assistant to his father, Alexander James Dallas, who was Secretary of the Treasury under Madison, and the successful financier of the second war with England. Returning to the bar, he was made deputy attorney general for Philadelphia county, an office, now known as district attorney; and was later elected mayor of the city. After the election of Jackson, whom he supported, he was appointed United States district attorney, from which office he was elected to serve a brief unexpired term in the Senate in 1831.



He was attorney general under Governor Wolf and became Minister to Russia by appointment of President Van Buren in 1837. Two years later he was recalled at his own request and resumed the practice of his profession.

When the National Democratic convention met in Baltimore in 1844 the party leaders, who had decided on the overthrow of Van Buren, fully appreciated the fact that the controlling States in the great battle the Democrats had to accept with Henry Clay, were New York and Pennsylvania. The defeat of Van Buren, when he had a majority of all the delegates in the convention, and whose friends believed that he had been deliberately betrayed and sacrificed, made the friends of Mr. Polk, the nominee for President, anxious to conciliate the Van Buren element, and they unanimously awarded the nomination for Vice-President to Silas Wright, then Senator from New York and Van Buren's ablest lieutenant. The Morse magnetic telegraph had just then got into operation between Washington and Baltimore, and he was advised of the nomination by message, to which a prompt, peremptory declination was returned.

Finding that the national ticket could not be strengthened by a New Yorker in the second place, the leaders naturally turned to Pennsylvania. The names of George M. Dallas and Commodore Stewart were presented by the Pennsylvania delegates. The first ballot exhibited a scattering vote, largely complimentary, in which Commodore Stewart received 23 and Dallas 13; but on the second ballot Dallas received 220 votes to 36 for all others, and was unanimously nominated as the Democratic candidate for Vice-President on the ticket with Polk.

There was no telegraph line between Philadelphia and Baltimore, and Mr. Dallas was entirely ignorant of



the fact that his name would be presented to the convention. It was generally expected that Van Buren would be nominated for President, and that would necessarily throw the Vice-President to one of the Southern States. After the convention a special committee was charged with the duty of personally visiting Mr. Dallas and informing him of his nomination. His home in Philadelphia was not reached until a very late hour in the night, when he was called up and appeared in his library gown, and received the midnight notice that he had been chosen as the Democratic candidate for the second office in the Republic. The information was as unexpected as it was gratifying to Mr. Dallas, and he gave a very cordial acceptance.

The success of the Polk and Dallas ticket, and the prominent part that Mr. Dallas was compelled to play in passing the revenue tariff act of 1846 by his casting vote as Vice-President, strengthened him with the party generally throughout the country, and also with the party leaders at home, who were all compelled to accept the new revenue tariff policy. Every Democratic member of Congress from Pennsylvania voted against the new tariff with the single exception of David Wilmot, who represented a purely agricultural district, with but little manufacturing interests, and he was re-elected. But the Whigs gained largely on the tariff issue immediately after the passage of the new revenue bill, and carried a decided majority in the congressional delegation.

Mr. Dallas was severely criticised by some of the Pennsylvania Democrats for having given the deciding vote in favor of a tariff policy that was regarded as very injurious to Pennsylvania, and that resulted in the disastrous defeat of the party in the State, but he met his critics in a manly and heroic manner, declaring that as Vice-President he did not represent the State

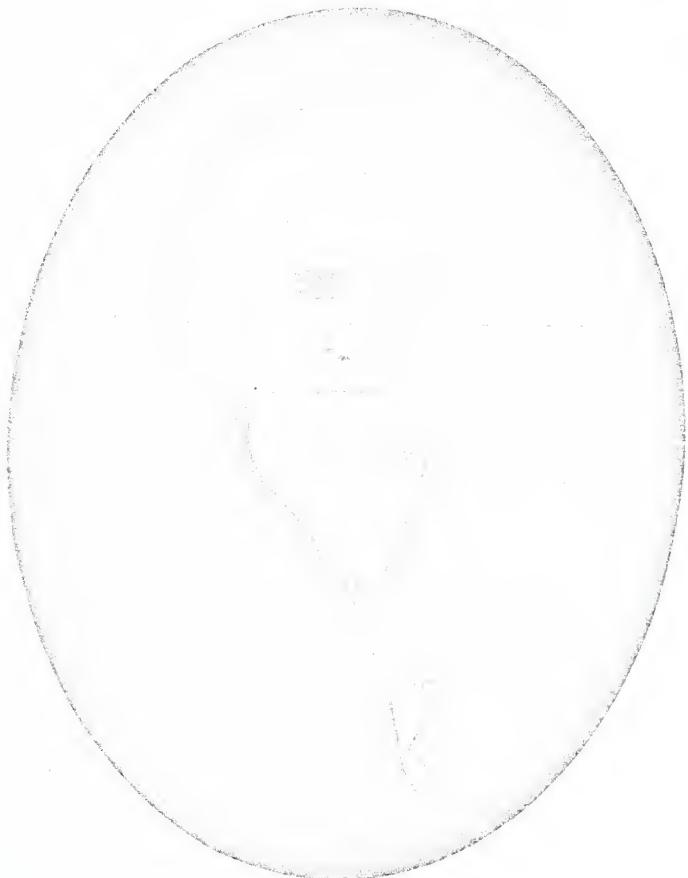


of Pennsylvania, but represented the Democracy of the nation, and he regarded it as his duty to accept the proclaimed faith of the organization. He stated that his duty might have been different had he represented a single State as a Senator or as a Representative, but as his position was one distinctly national in its character, his duty to the nation was higher than his duty to the State.

James Buchanan was then altogether the foremost Democrat in the State. He was eminently able, severely discreet, thoroughly honest, and was well trained in the details of Pennsylvania politics. When he entered the Polk cabinet he had already figured in the National Democratic convention of 1844 as a Presidential candidate, receiving as high as twenty-six votes, and he at once became an aggressive candidate for the succession. He was universally respected rather than beloved, as he did not win the sympathy and affection of the masses as he might have done had he been more genial in his qualities, but those who knew him best respected him most for his sober and conscientious convictions, and the fidelity with which he adhered to them. A number of leading Democrats in the State wanted a more flexible type of man for President. They saw that he was strong with the party in the nation and that all he needed was the cordial support of his own State to give him success sooner or later.

It became necessary to find a Democratic opponent of Buchanan in Pennsylvania who would contrast favorably with him in character and qualifications, and Dallas was the one man who filled that bill. They had no hope of making Dallas a successful candidate for President, but he was the strongest man who could be pitted against Buchanan, and from 1844 until 1856, when Buchanan was finally successful, there was a





*George M. Dallas*



constant struggle between a large majority of the Democratic leaders and followers supporting Buchanan, and an able and most aggressive but small minority that supported Dallas.

One of the leaders in this struggle against Buchanan was Reah Frazer, of Lancaster, where Mr. Buchanan lived.

He was able, tireless and even desperate in his denunciations of Buchanan as the "favorite son," and as the acknowledged leader of the anti-Buchanan forces, that was magnified in importance by the fact that Buchanan and Frazer were townsmen and members of the same bar, he crystallized a very formidable organization, sent the Pennsylvania delegation to the National convention shorn of its power by Democratic division in the State, and in 1848 Buchanan received only fifty-five votes for President, while Dallas received threec.

The strength of the supporters of Dallas against Buchanan culminated in 1852 when thirty-two of the 133 delegates to the State convention presented an address to the body protesting against the nomination of Buchanan for President. It was an able paper, and made a profound impression not only upon the convention, but upon the country.

It was signed among others by John Scott, of Huntingdon, afterward Republican United States Senator; and by Wilson Riley, of Franklin, Buchanan's native county, who was later elected as a Democratic congressman. The delegation to the National convention, however, was instructed to adopt the unit rule, and Buchanan received the vote of the State. The contest in the National convention opened between Cass and Buchanan, Cass starting with 116 votes and Buchanan with 93, and on the twenty-second ballot Buchanan reached his highest vote at 104, when Cass had fallen



to 53. On the thirty-fifth ballot Cass reached his highest vote of 131 and Buchanan had fallen off to 39, and on the forty-ninth ballot, after a struggle of several days, Pierce was nominated by a practically unanimous vote.

In 1856, when the convention met to elect delegates to the Cincinnati National convention the Buchanan men had practically stamped out the Dallas movement, as there were but few and feeble dissenting votes in the State convention on the Buchanan issue. Every delegate elected was required to give a written pledge to vote for Buchanan until a nomination was effected or his name withdrawn by his friends, and for the first time Buchanan appeared before a National convention with a practically united party, not only in the delegation, but in the Democratic sentiment of his State. His nomination and election logically followed, and Dallas was thenceforth unfelt in the political struggles of the State.

Buchanan asked to be recalled from the English mission in 1856, to which President Pierce had appointed him, to become Pierce's competitor for the succession, and Pierce exhibited his appreciation of Buchanan's new political attitude by appointing Mr. Dallas to succeed him as Minister to England. When Buchanan became President he exhibited a high measure of political manhood by continuing Mr. Dallas as Minister to the Court of St. James during his entire term.

Mr. Dallas figured conspicuously in three contests in his State as a candidate for President, but was never regarded even by his most enthusiastic friends as within the range of success. He was made simply the leader of a minority opposition, but his great ability, his unblemished character and his ripe experience in statesmanship fully warranted his friends in



pressing him as a Presidential possibility. I never met him until 1861 after his return from the English mission, and then only in a casual way. He was a very attractive personality with his wealth of silvered locks, finely moulded features and courtly manners and a genial smile and cordial greeting that bespoke pleasant companionship. He lived in quiet retirement after his return from England until the 31st of December, 1864, when at the full patriarchal age he passed away, profoundly lamented by good citizens of every faith.

Pennsylvania had never been honored with a President or Vice-President until Mr. Dallas reached the Vice-Presidency in 1844, and he is the only Pennsylvanian who was ever chosen to the position, although Richard Rush, John Sergeant and Amos Ellmaker had been candidates before the people and received a minority electoral vote. Mr. Buchanan was the only Pennsylvanian ever nominated for the Presidency with any hope of success, with the single exception of General Hancock, who was a close second to Garfield in 1880. James Black, of Lancaster, was nominated by the Prohibitionists in 1872, and Wharton Barker, of Philadelphia, was a candidate of the Populists in 1900, but neither figured in the ballots of the Electoral College.

It must not be assumed, however, that Pennsylvania had not a number of other more or less pretentious candidates for the Presidency. Governor Pollock, who had won the governorship in 1854 by 40,000 majority, and who was in hearty sympathy with the American sentiment of that period, planned an aggressive campaign to make himself a Presidential candidate in 1856, but the Republican sentiment, inspired by the Kansas-Nebraska issue, subordinated the American mastery, and he fell with his cause, and his name



never appeared before a convention. John M. Read, who was the first Republican to carry the State in the contest of '58, was made an anxious Presidential candidate by his friends. I had been in the convention and aided to nominate him, and soon after the election I was invited to a confidential meeting of his friends at his house to consider the question of launching him in the Presidential race, but Cameron entered the field aggressively and his power of organization made it a hopeless battle for Judge Read. General Cameron was a very earnest candidate for President in 1860, but while he had the instructions of his State on a direct vote, the delegation was largely divided, making his cause a hopeless one.

Asa Packer had the cordial nomination of the Democrats of Pennsylvania for the Presidency in 1868. He had little taste for the contest, but his friends were very earnest, and at one time thought it possible that he might be nominated. He received the vote of the Pennsylvania delegation on the first six ballots, when his name was withdrawn. Governor Curtin and Thomas A. Scott were both discussed in the circle of their friends, and with their own knowledge, as possible candidates before the Liberal Republican convention in Cincinnati, in 1872, and both were quite willing that their names should be presented if favorable opportunity offered.

Scott would have been a very dangerous candidate for Grant if he had been nominated, as he was specially strong on two points on which Greeley was fatally weak. Greeley lost the business interests because of his uncertain financial policy as to resumption, and the Democrats refused to support him because he had mercilessly lampooned them for thirty years. Scott would have commanded the entire confidence of the business interests, and as his political sympathies were



Democratic he would have been enthusiastically supported by that party. He knew that he could not enter into an open contest for the nomination, but as it was a convention of political free lancers, liable to be confused and possibly deadlocked in its councils, a condition was possible in which his name could be introduced and his nomination carried by a whirl.

He was a very practical man and knew that he had only a remote chance, but he thought it was worth taking, and he arranged with me as chairman of the Pennsylvania delegation a special cipher by which he could be safely advised if opportunity offered for a dark horse.

I have never known a more earnest candidate for the Presidency than Governor Geary, who received the largest vote on first ballot in the National convention of Labor Reformers at Columbus, O., in 1872, but on the third ballot David Davis, of Illinois, was chosen. Governor Hartranft also regarded himself as a Presidential possibility, and in 1876, when he was Governor of the State, he received practically the unanimous instructions of the Republican State convention in favor of the delegation voting for him as a unit in the Cincinnati convention of 1876, and was sixth on the list for six ballots, when Hayes won.

Mayor Fitler, of Philadelphia became an active candidate for the Presidency in 1888. His name was presented to the Chicago convention by Charles Emory Smith, and he received twenty-four votes on the first ballot, but there his candidacy ended. Senator Wallace and Congressman Randall were both active and earnest Presidential candidates for nearly a decade, and Randall narrowly missed the nomination at Cincinnati in 1880 and also had the vote of his State as a unit in the Chicago convention of 1884.



Wallace never made an open battle as a Presidential candidate, but he long dreamed of reaching the Presidency, as had many hundreds before and since his day. The era of dark horses as Presidential candidates began with Polk, was repeated with Pierce, with Lincoln, with Hayes, with Garfield and with Bryan, and it is not surprising that many public men who have had no prominence in Presidential struggles have dreamed the sweet dream of ruling the Republic.



## XL.

## AN ELECTIVE JUDICIARY.

The Causes for the Agitation of Making Judges Elective—Judicial Hostility to the Reform Constitution of 1838 an Important Factor—The Protracted Struggle Between Governor Shunk and the Whig Senate over a Judge for White's Indiana District Aroused very General Hostility to Executive Appointments—Several Nominations Rejected, and after Shunk's Re-election the Whig Senate Dictated the Appointment of John C. Knox and Confirmed it—The Earnest Battle in the Legislature to Defeat an Elective Judiciary—The People Appreciated the Trust and have Presented a Generally Creditable Record in Judicial Elections.

FRANCIS R. SHUNK was inaugurated as Governor in January, 1845, and his administration, had he lived to complete his second term, would doubtless have been generally creditable and not specially eventful but for the fact that in 1846 a Whig hurricane swept the State, because of the repeal of the tariff of 1842, and the Whigs elected enough senators that year to enable them to hold the control of that body for three years. The Whig senate locked horns with the Governor on several judicial nominations, and an agitation was thereby quickened that carried the amendment to the Constitution making all our judges elective.

I never met Governor Shunk but once, and then had little opportunity to form any judgment as to his personal qualities. He was tall, with a large, angular frame, and a face that exhibited unmistakable evidences of strength and sincerity. He was not a brilliant man, nor was he graceful in personal accomplishments, but he possessed a large measure of natural intellectual force that brought intelligence, careful



study and unblemished integrity. Although elected in the white heat of the Polk-Clay battle of 1844, the Whigs generally respected him for his blameless character, and he had every opportunity to make a successful administration.

The terrible strain upon the credit of the State in 1841 had entirely perished, and under the impetus given to industry and trade by the tariff of 1842 the State was rapidly approaching a high degree of prosperity. There were no complicated State issues to embarrass him, and he possessed the universal and absolute confidence of his own party with a large measure of respect from his political opponents. He called to the head of his cabinet Jesse Miller, a product of my own native mountains of Perry, who had served as a member of Congress, and stood high in the confidence and respect of the best Democratic leaders of the State. There was no legislation during Shunk's term as Governor to cast reproach upon the Commonwealth, and he died soon after his re-election, in 1847, leaving as clean a record, outside of mere partisan dispute, as was written by any of our Pennsylvania executives.

At the election of 1846 the Whigs chose nearly every State senator returned that year, and also carried a majority of the house, making Charles Gibbons, of Philadelphia, speaker of the senate, and James Cooper, of Adams, later United States Senator, speaker of the house, and John Banks, of Reading, who was Porter's opponent for Governor in 1841, state treasurer. There was much unrest throughout the State arising from the general dissatisfaction of the people with the attitude of the judiciary of the State. As a rule, the judges whose tenures were limited by the new Constitution of 1838 often defied and openly blasphemed the new fundamental law, and it required



but a spark to kindle the dissatisfaction into revolution. The spark came from the Indiana judicial district, where Judge White, the father of the present ex-Judge White, of the same county, had long been the president judge in the district comprising Indiana, Armstrong and several other adjacent counties.

It was a primitive rural community then, sparsely settled, and chiefly forest. Judge White was not only an able judge, but his genial intercourse with the people generally attached them very strongly to him, and when his term was about to expire 16,000, embracing nearly an equal number of Whigs and Democrats, signed petitions to Governor Shunk asking for his reappointment. There was no blemish on Judge White's judicial record that could be urged against him, but Governor Shunk, in obedience to the imperious demand of party interests, refused to renominate the Whig judge. At different times he sent several names of Democrats to the Senate to fill Judge White's place, and all of them were admittedly eminently qualified, alike in character and attainments, to fill the judicial chair, but the Whig senators decided with entire unanimity that they would not be a party to the sacrifice of one of the ablest and most popular judges of the State simply because of his political faith, and every nomination sent to the senate was promptly rejected.

The agitation became intense in Judge White's district, and the contest naturally attracted very general attention throughout the State. The senate claimed that it was part of the appointing power as a co-ordinate branch of the government, and that it could not consistently permit a competent and faithful judge to be smitten because he happened to harmonize with the senate in political faith rather than with the Executive. It was the burning question



of the State for a year or more, and it started in every section of the Commonwealth an organized effort to strip the Executive of the appointment of judges in the interest of a non-partisan judiciary.

In the meantime Judge White's district was without a judge, and great inconvenience was suffered by the people. The result was, after Shunk's re-election in the fall of 1847, the Whig senators regarded the contest as hopeless, and they finally indicated a Democrat who could command an affirmative vote in the senate. John C. Knox had been several sessions in the house as a representative from Tioga County, and was accepted as the Democratic leader of the body. He was young, delightful in companionship, able in council or debate, and personally popular with both sides of the chamber. He was indicated by the Whig senators as the man they would confirm, and he was nominated by the Governor, who was glad to emerge from the conflict with a Democratic judge, and Knox was continued on the bench until he was called to the supreme court of the State. He was a highly respected member of the court of last resort, but after serving a part of his term he resigned to accept the attorney generalship under Governor Packer in 1858, when he moved to Philadelphia and was a very successful member of the bar until his death some years later.

The breach between the Democratic Governor and the Whig senate extended into several judicial districts. He nominated Judge Nill, of Chambersburg, to be president judge of the Chester and Delaware district, but the bar resented the invasion of a foreign judicial officer, and successfully appealed to the senate for his rejection. A like dispute arose in the Bucks and Montgomery district, where the senate and the Governor locked horns, finally ending in a compromise. It was these judicial contests between the Executive



and the senate which strengthened and quickened into aggressive action the widespread conviction that the selection of judges should be remanded to the people to escape the power of a partisan Executive who regarded party interests as paramount to the proper administration of justice. Governor Shunk did not live to see the revolution reach its consummation, but the Legislatures of 1849-50, by a very large majority, passed resolutions submitting a constitutional amendment to the people, and when the issue finally reached the people in the fall of 1850 it was carried by an immense majority.

I watched with much interest the contest for an elective judiciary, and had a very humble part in it. As a boy editor I shared all the inflamed prejudices against the arbitrary power of the Executive in the appointment of judges, and heard most of the more important discussions on the subject in the Legislature. When the resolution to amend the Constitution to make judges elective was first passed by the Legislature it aroused the conservative elements of the State, and they made a very desperate struggle to prevent the Legislature of 1850 from giving the necessary second approval to the measure, as a proposed legislative amendment to the Constitution must be passed, without any modification whatever, by two consecutive Legislatures before it can be submitted to the people.

A very earnest effort was made to control the Legislature, and some of the ablest men of the State were chosen to the house solely for the purpose of defeating it. Among them was James M. Porter, a brother of the Governor, who had been judge and was leader of the Easton bar; Conyngham, of Luzerne, who afterward served with great credit on the bench, was another, and with him was Bueumont, from the same



county, and a man of high character and influence. These, with Cornyn, of Huntingdon, and others, made a very earnest struggle to prevent the passage of the amendment.

William F. Packer, of Lycoming, afterward Governor, was speaker of the house, and was one of the most accomplished parliamentary leaders of the State. He was very shrewd and able, and he exhausted the power of the speaker to prevent the house reaching a vote on the question. By careful management in halting the action of the committee, and afterward in halting the action of the house, the measure was delayed until near the close of the session, when it was confidently expected that, with the aid of the speaker, the proposed amendment could not be reached. It was possible for any member of the house to call it up at certain times, but Packer was scrupulously careful when such opportunities offered not to recognize any member of the house without knowing that he did not propose to call for action on the judicial amendment. With all his ability he was finally outgeneraled by Representative Schwartzwelder, of Allegheny, who was the wag of the body, a universal favorite, and quite as shrewd as the speaker. He understood the desperation of the struggle, and one day when under the rules any member could call up a measure he made a personal appeal to Speaker Packer to recognize him and give him the floor to call up a divorce bill. Packer had no doubt that Schwartzwelder meant a bill to divorce some man and wife, but he was appalled when, after recognizing Schwartzwelder, he called up the proposed amendment to the Constitution, and forced it to successful passage. Packer was terribly infuriated, and as soon as he could leave the chair he went to Schwartzwelder and charged him with deliberately deceiving him. "Oh!" said Schwartzwelder, "I called



up the most important divorce bill of the session, a bill to divorce the judiciary from politics."

The legislative amendment to the Constitution was largely ratified by the people and was a very radical measure. It was assailed with great force as arbitrarily terminating the tenures of all the judges in a single day, regardless of the high commissions they held from the Commonwealth for a term of years. It was admitted that very few of our judges, high or low, merited such a sudden and terrible humiliation, but the juggling that had been exhibited by some of the judges after the adoption of the Constitution of 1838, to extend their tenures beyond the clearly defined purpose of the new fundamental law, made public sentiment demand that the whole judiciary of the State should be swept out in a single day, and let the people begin with a clean sheet to elect their Supreme and district judges.

Both the great parties realized what a revolutionary departure had been made, and that they must prove to the State and nation that the change was a beneficent one. The Democrats, then the dominant power of the State, strengthened their organization by calling an entirely distinct judicial State convention to nominate the five candidates for the supreme court, while they held another general political State convention at different time and place to nominate candidates for Governor and canal commissioner. The Whigs nominated both judicial and political candidates by the same convention, but exhibited their appreciation of the necessity of non-partisanship in the election of judges by nominating Judge Coulter, a pronounced Democrat and a member of the old court. The Democrats had nominated no member of the old court, excepting Chief Justice Gibson, and the wisdom of the Whigs was exhibited by the success of



Coulter, who was the only man on the Whig State ticket elected.

It is needless to say that the judges of 1851 felt no more friendly to the judicial amendment than did the judges of 1838. I remember meeting the old supreme court in Harrisburg the last time it sat there, and heard some of the expressions from the judges on the subject. Chief Justice Gibson had no reason to complain, as he was nominated to be continued on the bench, and Coulter and Chambers were both on the Whig ticket, but Burnside and Rodgers gave full vent to their contempt for what they regarded as an angry eruption of the people that was likely to degrade the courts of the State. Burnside was then well advanced in years, and at times, when in a jocular mood, was inclined to boast that he was the ugliest man in the State. He was ruthlessly blunt at times, both on and off the bench, and I well remember his prediction that with the people electing judges it wouldn't be long until Joe Barker, then a labor leader, who had inspired riots in Allegheny, for which he was convicted and imprisoned, might reasonably expect to reach the chief justiceship of the State. Force was given to the suggestion by the fact that when in prison Barker had been elected mayor of the city, and Governor Johnston was compelled to pardon him out of prison so he could assume his new official duties.

The general sentiment of political leaders of both parties was so strong in favor of maintaining a high judicial standard that the judicial nominations generally were very creditable, and I am free to say that, after having watched with more than ordinary interest the election of judges in Pennsylvania for over half a century, I believe the people have maintained quite as high a standard of judicial ability and fidelity as could have been maintained by appointments of par-



tisan executives. Only a very few, indeed not more than can be counted on the fingers of a single hand, have brought actual reproach upon the administration of justice, and, while partisan politics has in many instances interposed to prevent the election or re-election of men pre-eminently fitted for the judicial office, as a rule even those who won the judicial chair by purely partisan methods have generally appreciated the sanctity of their high calling and made creditable records for their courts.

The people must be credited with having exercised an unusual degree of political independence and of fidelity to the proper administration of justice in the election of judges. In Philadelphia at the first election the demand for an independent court became so strong that after the Democrats Whigs and Native Americans had all presented candidates for judges the leaders were compelled to make up an independent judicial ticket, consisting of one Whig (Thompson), and one Democrat (Kelly), then serving on the bench, and Allison, who represented the Native Americans. A desperate fight was made against this independent judicial ticket, but it triumphed by a large majority. Thus Philadelphia set the pace for independent judges.

In order to understand to what extent the people have been independent in the election of judges it must be remembered that in every Republican judicial district in the State, with the single exception of Lancaster, the Democrats have at one time or another elected judges, and also that in every Democratic judicial district in the State, with the single exception of Berks, the Republicans have at one time or another elected judges. Philadelphia and Allegheny, the two Gibraltars of Republicanism, have many times elected Democratic judges in square contests between the Republican and Democratic candidates. Just



now we have exceptionally severe political conditions with omnipotent power on the part of the majority party of the State, and little force or organization in the minority party, but, reviewing the record made by the people of Pennsylvania for more than half a century of an elective judiciary, it must be said of them that they have been quite as faithful to the honest administration of justice as would have been the Governors of the State had their power to commission judges been continued.



## XII.

## ADVENT OF THE LOCOMOTIVE.

The Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad Ran by Horse-power until 1834—The First Train Drawn by the Locomotive "Black Hawk"—The Trip From Lancaster to Philadelphia Made in Eight Hours and a Half—Protest of the Conestoga Teamsters and Wagon Taverns against Steam Railways—Building the Cumberland Valley Railroad—Shinplasters Issued to Financier It—The First Pennsylvania Railroad Charter Prepared and Presented by a Lobbyist Without the Knowledge of the Philadelphians—Desperate Struggle Between the Baltimore and Ohio and the Pennsylvania Companies—Both Obtained Charters, but the Baltimore and Ohio Franchise had Severe Conditions which Made it Unacceptable, and the Pennsylvania was Given the Field in 1847—Senator Gibbons' Battle with His Constituents, and the Controversy with Judge Conrad.

THE administration of Governor Shunk dated the advent and mastery of the steam railway in transportation. The question of constructing railways was earnestly agitated in Pennsylvania some years before the locomotive had been developed, and when the railway line was expected to be merely a tram road with cars to be drawn by horses.

John Stevens, of New York, a man of broad, progressive ideas, who was abreast with Fulton in the development of the steamboat, was the man who first urged the construction of railways. His steamboat, the *Phoenix*, that ran on the Delaware and Connecticut rivers, was brought to the Delaware by sea, and was the first steamboat to brave the waves of the ocean. As early as 1812 he publicly advocated the theory of carriage by rail, and predicted the practicability of using steam. He appealed to his own State of New



York, but was turned down as a pestiferous crank, just as Professor Morse was when he first went to Congress for aid to construct a telegraph line.

In 1823, after having been repelled in several other States, Mr. Stevens, then at the advanced age of seventy-four years, made a personal appeal to the Pennsylvania Legislature to construct a railway from Philadelphia to Columbia. He named such men as Stephen Girard, Horace Binney and John Conley, of Philadelphia, with Amos Elmaker, of Lancaster, among his incorporators, and Conley was made president of the company. The franchise was given for the period of fifty years, and preliminary surveys were undertaken, but it is evident that the men named as incorporators were not heartily enlisted in the work, as Stevens was never able to raise the sum of \$5,000 to complete a mile of the road.

Another charter was granted by the same Legislature for the Columbia, Lancaster and Philadelphia Railroad, but no attempt was ever made to vitalize the enterprise.

The necessity for a railway from Philadelphia to connect with the canal at Columbia became more generally appreciated each year, and as all individual and corporate efforts had failed, the board of canal commissioners ordered a series of preliminary surveys, and the Legislature of 1828 authorized the construction of the road from Philadelphia through Lancaster to Columbia by the State.

It was not a popular measure throughout the Commonwealth, as the great mass of the people believed that the investment of State money in railways was little less than extravagant waste, and the appropriations were very grudgingly made for the construction of the road, and it was not until April, 1834, that a single track was completed between Philadelphia and Columbia.



The locomotive had just made its appearance and the first train that passed over the new line from Columbia to Philadelphia on the 16th day of April, 1834, had secured a locomotive known as "Black Hawk," then regarded as the finest engine that had been constructed. They did not venture to make the entire trip in one day, but on the 15th the run was made from Columbia to Lancaster, where the party rested overnight. On the morning of the 16th the train left Lancaster at eight o'clock and arrived at the head of the Schuylkill incline plane at 4.30, making the trip from Lancaster to Philadelphia in eight hours and a half.

So little confidence had the managers in the endurance of the locomotive that an empty horse car followed the locomotive train with relays of horses at different points to rescue the party in case the locomotive gave out. They had much difficulty with the locomotive and at times the passengers had to get out and give a healthy push to aid it in starting.

It is difficult for our people in this progressive age to understand the desperate resistance made by the people generally throughout the State to the introduction of railroads. When Pennsylvania at an early day had given liberal assistance to the construction of turnpikes, making continuous lines from Baltimore and Philadelphia to Pittsburg, it was accepted that our Commonwealth was in the very front of progress, and our turnpikes developed an immense industry in what was known as the Conestoga wagons. Hundreds of six-horse teams, with immense covered wagons, were constantly on the highways, as they transported commerce and trade between the East and West, and they created what formed a very powerful political factor in opposing the introduction of railways, in the "wagon tavern."

Every few miles along our through turnpikes was



found the wagon tavern. There was one or more in every village, and well-to-do farmers whose homes were on the turnpikes ran the wagon tavern as a side industry. All of them had very capacious yards about the barn to accommodate the teams during the night. Excepting in extremely inclement weather the horses always stood out securely attached to their wagon. Hay and oats were furnished for the horses at very moderate prices, and the driver could obtain a "snack" or cold lunch in the evening, a bed, hot breakfast and an evening and morning drink of whisky for 25 cents.

The proprietors of the wagon taverns were generally men of influence in the community and when the proposition to construct railways was seriously urged the wagon drivers and wagon tavern keepers made a most aggressive battle.

Mass meetings were held along the lines of the turnpikes to protest against the introduction of railways, which were declared to be of doubtful utility and which could be successful only by the destruction of one of the important industrial interests of the State, that had immense sums of money invested and which would certainly be destroyed. Political orators, always ready to cater to popular prejudice, delivered most fervent harangues against the proposed injustice of bringing ruin to the great industrial "interests," which centered in wagon transportation. In some instances senators and representatives were elected solely on that issue.

Fortunately the progress of the railroad was so gradual that there was no violent destruction of the wagon transportation interests and the grand old Conestoga wagon, with its team of six magnificent horses, usually elegantly caparisoned, gradually perished in Pennsylvania.

As early as 1829 the public-spirited business men of Baltimore appeared before the Pennsylvania Legis-



lature and asked for a charter for a road from Baltimore to the Susquehanna River, thence to the Borough of Carlisle in the Cumberland Valley. The committee of the senate reported that it would be against sound public policy to grant the franchise, and the measure failed. The chief reason given for excluding the Baltimore railroad was that the board of canal commissioners had authorized a survey for a road from Harrisburg to Chambersburg and thence by way of Gettysburg to York, and in 1831 an act was passed for the incorporation of the Cumberland Valley Railroad Company.

The progress of the work was very slow, and the franchise was forfeited for want of subscriptions to the stock, but the Legislature extended the time, and on the 2d of June, 1835, sufficient stock had been subscribed to warrant the Governor in issuing letters patent creating the company. The bill rechartering the United States Bank as a State institution required the bank to subscribe \$100,000 to the capital stock of the company, and Mr. Nicholas Biddle, president of the bank, not only paid the \$100,000 subscription, but gave an additional \$100,000 to aid the enterprise, but when the bank failed in 1839 the stock of the Cumberland Valley Railroad was hardly worth enumerating among the assets.

The men engaged in the enterprise were confronted time and again with almost insuperable obstacles for want of means, and finally it was completed by a large issue of 50- and 25-cent paper money, then commonly known as "shinplasters." Money was extremely scarce after the financial revulsion of 1837, and the people were willing to receive anything in the similitude of money that had any fair semblance of credit.

When this issue of small bills was made they commanded a reasonable degree of confidence because the



directors of the company, most of whom were men of large means for that day, published a statement over their signatures, declaring that they individually, jointly, and severally guaranteed the payment of these notes. Among the signers was Charles B. Penrose, grandfather of the present United States Senator, Boies Penrose, who was then a State senator from the Cumberland district.

The road was opened with great ceremony from Harrisburg to Carlisle on the 16th of August, 1837; on the 10th of November the same year, it was formally opened to Newville, and on the 16th of the same month the shrill scream of the iron horse was first heard in Chambersburg, where there was a great military and popular display. The road was later extended to Hagerstown, but it was not regularly operated and only horse trains were run over it. It is now an important link in the Cumberland Valley Railroad's extended line to Winchester.

The interest exhibited by the people of Philadelphia and of Baltimore for the creation of railroad facilities in transportation was quickened by the heroic achievement of New York in the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825. Until that time Philadelphia was the metropolis of finance, commerce and trade, and possessed the largest population of any city in the country, but the completion of the great water highway from Lake Erie to the sea gave an advantage to New York that steadily drained Philadelphia of her money and commerce, and this decline of Philadelphia was greatly hastened by Jackson's withdrawal of \$8,000,000 of government deposits from the United States Bank, by the financial crisis of 1837, and by the later failure of the great banking institution.

Baltimore shared the apprehensions of Philadelphia, and both cities appreciated the necessity of reaching



westward to divide the rapidly growing trade of the new States then extending to the Father of Waters, with the State of Missouri on its western shore.

Strange as it may seem, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, then completed from Baltimore to Cumberland, was in advance of the people of Philadelphia in pressing for an all-rail line from the eastern coast to the waters of the Ohio at Pittsburg, and the first bill providing for the incorporation of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, proposing to construct a line from Harrisburg to Pittsburg, was prepared and presented to the Legislature without the knowledge of the Philadelphia business men. The Baltimore & Ohio had obtained from the Pennsylvania Legislature in 1845 a franchise for the extension of the road from Cumberland to Pittsburg. As there was then no proposition to construct any other railway line in the State, little opposition was exhibited to the project of the Baltimore & Ohio.

The man who first conceived and prepared the bill for the incorporation of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company was Captain Samuel D. Karns. He was jolly and companionable, and one of the most popular of the captains of the packet boats on the canal during the summer season, and in the winter he made his home at Harrisburg, and paid the expenses of what would now be regarded as rather a frugal livelihood, by picking up small fees as a lobbyist. He did not pretend to debauch legislators, but gave such attention to little matters of personal legislation as made parties willing to pay him the small fee he demanded.

He was very popular with most of the men in the Legislature, and could readily accomplish little special legislation that was unobjectionable. He saw the proposition of the Baltimore & Ohio for an extension of its lines through Pennsylvania to Pittsburg, and he



concluded that there should be competition, chiefly for the purpose of enlarging his income by an arrangement with the Baltimore & Ohio. He prepared a bill for the incorporation of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, but failed to enlist any general interest in it, and it made no figure in halting the Baltimore & Ohio, but it finally awakened the people of Philadelphia to the importance of Philadelphia having a central line through the State to Pittsburg. The franchise asked for by the Baltimore & Ohio was granted, but with severe conditions, and the franchise was forfeited within a year by failure to comply with its requirements.

When the Legislature of 1846 met Philadelphia had become thoroughly aroused to the importance of having a through railway line, and the only through line in the State, from the Atlantic coast to Pittsburg, and the charter of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company was ready when the Legislature opened, and a large and powerful lobby of Philadelphia business men on hand to press its passage.

The Baltimore & Ohio was there also with influential backing to obtain a renewal of the franchise it had forfeited. These two great interests were face to face and locked horns for a desperate conflict. The struggle lasted through nearly the entire session, and the debates in both branches became extremely bitter. The Baltimore & Ohio was logically backed by all the southern counties of the State on the line of the road.

Both sides believed that it would be midsummer madness to attempt to make two roads through the State, and that the successful party in the battle would have the only railway line through the State for all time. So desperate was the conflict, with both sides lacking absolute confidence of success, that it





Governors under Constitution of 1838

David R. Porter

Francis R. Shunk

William F. Johnson

William Bigler

James Pollock



finally ended in the passage of both bills, but with such limitations on the Baltimore & Ohio charter that it was within the power of the Pennsylvania corporation, by advancing rapidly in its work, to render null and void the franchise to its competitor. The bill for the charter of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company was approved on April 13, 1846, and on April 21, 1846, being the day before the final adjournment, the Baltimore & Ohio bill was approved.

The Baltimore & Ohio bill provided that if the Pennsylvania Company should have \$3,000,000 of bona fide subscriptions to its stock, and 10 per cent. paid in, it would secure letters patent from the Governor, and if thirty miles or more be put under contract for construction to the satisfaction of the Governor, and \$1,000,000 of stock subscription in its treasury on or before the 30th of July, 1847, the Governor should issue his proclamation declaring that the right of way of the Baltimore & Ohio through Pennsylvania should be null and void.

The business people of Philadelphia appreciated their opportunity, and the sentiment was so strong in favor of the new enterprise that the city authorities made a liberal subscription, which, with the action of a number of stockholders paying their installments in advance, gave the company the required money in the treasury, and on August 2, 1847, the Governor issued his proclamation declaring the franchise of the Baltimore & Ohio to be null and void.

One of the many interesting episodes of this contest brought into prominence one of the most brilliant and promising of the young men of Philadelphia. Charles Gibbons, then quite a young man, took his seat as a senator from Philadelphia at the session of 1845, and naturally desiring the construction of a railway in Pennsylvania he heartily supported the proposition to



give the Baltimore & Ohio the right of way from Cumberland to Pittsburg.

In the session of 1846, when Philadelphia came forward and made earnest battle for an exclusive charter, Senator Gibbons assumed that both companies should have equal rights, and thus became involved in inflamed antagonism with those who represented Philadelphia interests. He was a most able and adroit debater and a man who loved the flame of battle. He was denounced by mass meetings, and by the press of Philadelphia, for his alleged apostacy to the interests of his own constituents, all of which he resented with great ability and stinging invective.

One of his severe critics was Judge Conrad, a man of brilliant poetic qualities, who challenged Gibbons to a duel. Gibbons replied to the challenge by saying that he had been taught at the altar of his own home that dueling was opposed to the laws of man and God, and Conrad responded with unmingled venom, charging him with insulting his fellowmen, and when called to account taking refuge behind his mother's apron strings.

Philadelphia never had a cleaner or abler man representing it in the senate; and that he was honest in the attitude that he assumed on the railroad contest none who knew him personally could question, but it ended what promised to be one of the most brilliant careers of Philadelphia's distinguished men, and he chafed in retirement for nearly a quarter of a century, although he was an earnest, ardent partisan, a gentleman of blameless character, and certainly one of the ablest of the champions of his party.

He was recalled to public position and nominated for district attorney in 1868, but was returned as defeated. In a contest he first won the office and held it for a few months, when the same court reversed its judgment and restored Furman Sheppard, who had



been originally declared elected. Had he not become involved in cross purposes with Philadelphia, I doubt whether any young man in the city at that time would have made as successful a career in politics, or so ably sustained himself in the highest official responsibilities.

The Whigs of the senate emphasized their appreciation of his character and ability at the meeting of the session of 1847, by electing him speaker, although a majority of the Whigs had been in conflict with him in the railroad struggle. I was present at the organization of that Legislature, and I noted with special interest the elastic step with which Gibbons entered the speaker's stand, and the smile of triumph that illuminated his handsome face.



## XIII.

THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD  
COMPANY.

The Baltimore and Ohio having been Forced from the Field by Conditions of its Franchise, the Pennsylvania Railroad had the Exclusive Right to Cross the State Westward with a Railroad Line—Had \$1,000,000 in its Treasury July 30, 1847—Interesting Meeting between Chief Engineer Thompson and Chairman of the Canal Board, James Burns—The Work of Construction began at Meadow Lane, Harrisburg, July 7, 1847—The First Train in the Juniata Valley—Struggle for the Presidency between Patterson and Thompson—Why Thompson was Successful—A Prohibitory Tonnage Tax in the Pennsylvania Charter—The Advent of Thomas A. Scott—Interesting Episode of Scott's Efforts to Repeal Tonnage Tax in 1860—The Repudiation Eruption in Allegheny.

THE Pennsylvania Railroad Company, after a desperate struggle of many months and direct aid from the City of Philadelphia, was able to report on the 30th of July, 1847, that \$1,000,000 had been paid into the treasury on account of stock subscriptions, and the franchise of the Baltimore & Ohio became null and void and the field was clear for the Pennsylvania through line.

The company had been organized on the 31st of March, 1847, with Samuel V. Merrick as president, and J. Edgar Thompson was appointed chief engineer to locate the line, with William B. Foster, Jr., formerly canal commissioner and later vice-president of the company, and Edward Miller as his associates.

The great engineering feat of crossing the Alleghenies at grade was accomplished by Chief Engineer Thompson, although very many of his own profession doubted the practicability of attempting





Samuel V. Merrick



to carry passengers and traffic over the mountains at grade.

James Burns, of Lewistown, was then president of the canal board, and believed that there was nothing about transportation that he did not understand. He was a man of strong individuality and very limited education, but eminently practical. I have heard him tell the story many times of his visit to Chief Engineer Thompson when he reached Lewistown in locating the line. He had heard that Thompson had conceived what he regarded as the impossible theory of crossing the Alleghenies at grade, and as Thompson was a stranger in the city of Burns' home, Burns thought it his duty to exhibit his courtesy by calling upon Thompson.

Thompson was an extremely reticent man. It was a common saying around the Pennsylvania Railroad office when he was its president that he usually spoke about twice a day, and when Burns called to pay his respects to the chief engineer he found that he had to take the laboring oar in maintaining the conversation. He finally came to the point and asked Thompson how he expected to cross the Alleghenies, to which Thompson answered in his very quiet way that he would cross the mountains at grade. Burns said that he then knew that Thompson was a damned fool, but didn't think it his duty to undertake to contradict him.

Burns knew all about the Alleghenies, had run its incline planes for several years, and the idea of crossing the mountains at grade was to him the very height of absurdity, but he was too courteous to dispute the proposition. After considerable pause Burns again ventured to inquire what time the Pennsylvania Railroad, when completed, would occupy between Philadelphia and Pittsburg, to which Thompson blandly answered that they would go through in fifteen hours. Burns



said he then knew that Thompson was such a hopeless damned idiot that he would not waste further time conversing with him, and he rather frigidly bowed himself out.

Burns lived to make the journey from Philadelphia to Pittsburg in ten hours, and was one of the most devoted friends of Thompson during the remainder of his life.

With the million dollars in the treasury, that then seemed to the managers of that day as tenfold more money than seemed the \$90,000,000 that the same company had in its treasury after its recent increase of capital, the work of constructing this great artery of trade began at Meadow Lane, Harrisburg, where ground was broken, July 7, 1847, and the company had a perpetual struggle to find resources to prosecute the work, but in a little more than two years the first train passed over the line up the Susquehanna and Juniata to Lewistown.

I then resided in the Juniata Valley, and could not forget what was the greatest occasion of a century when the first song of the iron horse was heard at Mifflin station. The country people were out by thousands to see the railway train to which nearly all of them were entire strangers. A dense mass was packed in the little level close to the road, and the high hills close by the western side were literally covered with intensely anxious and wildly enthusiastic people. The shriek of the locomotive announced its coming, when within a mile or two of the station, and the whole audience moved as if electrified, and when the train came into the station with its majestic sweep, deafening shouts responded to the weird cry of the engine.

It was a new epoch and entirely new condition for the people of the community, but they speedily adjusted themselves to it, and in a little while the song



of the locomotive was heard repeatedly each day, and became one of the accepted advanced conditions of the age. The road was completed to the Allegheny portage railroad September 16, 1850, making a through connection from the Eastern sea to the waters of the Ohio. President Merrick bore the brunt of the exacting duties in the construction of the line, but he voluntarily retired in September, 1849, when the success of the enterprise was assured, and was succeeded by William C. Patterson, a prominent business man and financier.

Patterson was a man of progressive ideas, and well appreciated the great career and achievement of the new company. He startled the stockholders during the second year of his presidency by purchasing, for \$260,000, the Powelton tract in West Philadelphia, for the purposes of the company, and where for many years the chief Philadelphia station was located. The stockholders, especially those in the country, where there were many immediately along the line, had severe ideas of economy, and I well remember how the rural stockholders were greatly alarmed at what they regarded as President Patterson's reckless extravagance, although the portion of that ground now owned and absolutely needed by the company would cost many millions.

He also purchased the O'Harra tract in Pittsburg, where his intelligent forecast rendered a like service to the company, but the idea of flinging hundreds of thousands of dollars from a company with an always depleted treasury into real estate that the average stockholder could not believe would ever be needed, started an agitation for reform in the management of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, and Chief Engineer Thompson was made the opposition candidate to Patterson.



The struggle was a very earnest one, but the country stockholders gave an almost solid vote for Thompson for two reasons: First, they wanted to arrest Patterson's profligate policy, as they regarded it, and second, it was openly urged, and considered as a very powerful argument, that \$5,000 a year, the salary of the chief engineer, could be saved by electing him president, as he could perform the duties of both offices. These arguments prevailed, and in the fall of 1852 J. Edgar Thompson was placed at the head of the company, where his ripe experience as an engineer and his admirable business qualities gave the great corporation steady progress, and he lived to see it not only one of the great trunk lines of the country, but the most important railway system on the continent.

He died on the 27th of May, 1874, when he was succeeded by Thomas A. Scott, who at his death was succeeded by George B. Roberts, who died in office, and was succeeded by Frank Thompson, who also died in office, and was succeeded by A. J. Cassatt. The public career of these men will be given in a later chapter and will tell one of the grandest stories of achievement in the annals of the Commonwealth.

There are few people of to-day who have any just appreciation of the constant and at times apparently almost hopeless battle the struggling corporation had to make to maintain itself. The people of Pennsylvania were very strongly prejudiced against all corporations and there was not a single advance step necessary to be taken by the company that was not met with a most determined and at times desperate opposition.

The State owned the line of canals that the railway paralleled between Harrisburg and Pittsburg, and in the bitter conflict in the Legislature between the Pennsylvania and Baltimore & Ohio, each trying to impose the heaviest burdens upon the other, it was not difficult





William C. Patterson



for the Baltimore & Ohio, and all who were prejudiced against corporations, to force into the charter of the Pennsylvania Company a provision that was utterly fatal to anything but local trade, and severely extortive upon it. Ostensibly for the purpose of protecting the State canals, a tax of 5 mills per mile was required to be paid to the State for every ton of freight transported by the company. Of course, the line was then but a local road, and it simply taxed the transporters that much more as the tax was added to the ordinary freights.

When the railroad got into operation it soon became so oppressive that the Legislature was forced to reduce the tax to 3 mills per mile, and as that proved to be prohibitory in the coal and lumber traffic on the line, the Legislature later repealed the tax on these products of our industry.

The tax was a direct imposition upon the industry and commerce of the State and it was absolutely prohibitory on through traffic. On the north of the Pennsylvania line were the New York Central with its Lake Shore through connection and a great Canadian line, and on the south was the Baltimore & Ohio, all reaching for the trade of the West, and all free from tax upon tonnage. It was impossible, therefore, for the Pennsylvania Company to compete with these strong lines for through traffic, and Philadelphia was in the position of having expended many millions for the construction of a line to bring the commerce to Philadelphia, while the State imposed a prohibitory tax upon it.

In 1855 the Legislature passed a bill for the sale of the main line, including the canals from Philadelphia to Pittsburg and the Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad, and it provided that if purchased by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, as there would be no



competition between the State works and the railway, the tax on tonnage should be repealed. The same provision of the act released the property of the company from taxation for State purposes in consideration of the payment of a given sum of money. The supreme court held that section of the act to be unconstitutional, and the Pennsylvania Company became the purchaser of the main line with the tonnage tax remaining.

After the purchase of the main line Boyd Cummings, who was the last collector of tolls on the State road in Philadelphia, and who had Thomas A. Scott in his service as clerk for several years, called upon President Thompson, and told him that there was a young man in his employ who would certainly be needed by the railway corporation, and Scott was immediately engaged by Thompson and placed in charge of the construction of the Western division. That was the introduction and beginning of Colonel Scott's great career.

The company appealed to the Legislature year after year to maintain the faith of the State, plainly given in the act for the sale of the public works, by repealing the tax on tonnage, but public sentiment was so strong against any legislation in favor of corporations that the only reward received was a succession of humiliating defeats.

This continued until 1860 when Scott had succeeded to the vice-presidency made vacant by the death of Foster. He understood the situation and fully realized, as did President Thompson, that if the tax was not repealed the railway company could not compete for Western traffic. The company refused to pay the tax, and fought it desperately in the courts, but in 1859 the supreme court gave final judgment against the company for nearly \$900,000 of accumulated tax. It may seem strange to those familiar with the present colossal financial power of this great corporation, that



at that time it was next to an impossibility for it to pay that judgment, and yet it was in the power of the State treasurer and the attorney general to issue execution on it any day.

I was then a member of the senate and in hearty accord with Thompson and Scott in their efforts to enlarge the commerce in our State, and restore Philadelphia, in some degree at least, to her former grandeur as a commercial metropolis, but a great national battle was to be fought for the election of Lincoln, who had not yet been nominated, and also for the election of Curtin, who was nominated while the Legislature was in session, and if a Republican senate and a Republican house had then passed the bill for the repeal of the tonnage tax it would have cost them the State; indeed, they would have been utterly overwhelmed by the people.

Curtin had placed the management of his campaign in my hands, and I was compelled to accept it, although with much reluctance. I was thus directly responsible for the management of a political conflict in the pivotal State where judgment was final in declaring the judgment of the nation, and it would have been midsummer madness for me either to have supported the repeal at that time, or permitted it to be accomplished if I could prevent it.

Scott passed the bill through the house, and had many very earnest conferences with me, hoping to reconcile me to its passage in the senate. With the votes of Senator Finney and myself he had ample margin to win out in the senate, but Finney, who was the ablest member of the body, and romantically attached to Curtin, joined me in saying to Scott that it would be a betrayal of the highest political and personal trust for us to support the measure.

Desperate as was his condition, he fully appreciated



the supreme political necessities which governed the situation, and I remember one night in my room, after it had been finally decided that his bill could not be passed in the senate, he seemed to be in utter despair, as he said the company could not meet the large tonnage tax judgment that would doubtless be carried to execution when legislation failed. I said to him that I would most heartily support the measure at the next session, and Finney had joined in that promise, and I added that I would answer for the State treasurer (Eli Slifer), with whom I had the closest relations, and who was, like Finney, a most devoted friend of Curtin, for his assurance, to be accepted in the strictest confidence, that he would not, as State treasurer, demand the collection of the judgment for a year.

I said that I would go immediately to see him, and told Scott that he knew the attorney general, the only other officer who could enforce the collection, and that he should submit the matter frankly to the law officer of the government and return to my room. An hour later we were together again. He had the pledge of the attorney general (John C. Knox), and I gave him the pledge of the State treasurer that no process should issue upon the judgment for a year.

Scott was most indefatigable in that contest, and left no means untried to accomplish the control of the senate. He managed to get Curtin and Foster, who was Curtin's opponent, together in Philadelphia, and after explaining the situation and earnestly pressing the subject upon them, their amiability and their sympathy for Scott induced them to sign a paper stating that the tonnage tax question should not enter into the gubernatorial contest.

Scott telegraphed me that this paper had been given to him, and that he would come to Harrisburg on the



night train. I immediately telegraphed to Curtin that if he did not want to defeat himself for Governor he had better go home and remain until after the Legislature adjourned, which he did. When Scott presented the paper to me I handed him the despatch I had sent to Curtin, and that was his last effort that session to release his line from a most unjust and oppressive tax.

When the next Legislature met Curtin was Governor and pledged to Scott's relief, and his close friends generally in both branches of the Legislature were in sympathy with the movement. With all of that advantage, it was one of the most desperate and demoralizing contests that ever occurred in the history of Pennsylvania legislation. Scott devoted the summer and fall between the two sessions to organizing his friends in every county in order to reach legislators, and he published at liberal prices a vast amount of literature on the subject in nearly all the papers of the State, whether friendly or unfriendly to the measure; but while none could dispute the necessity of removing the tax to give our great artery of trade and our great commercial city enlarged commerce, the measure was fought with an earnestness and desperation that I have never before or since seen exhibited in legislative struggles.

It was an absolute necessity for the measure to succeed unless the Pennsylvania Railroad, that had already perfected its connection with the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago Road, should surrender the idea of making it a trunk line and of giving Philadelphia a fair share of Western trade. The measure passed the house early in the session, but it was not until within a very few weeks of final adjournment that it could command sufficient votes in the senate to give it a majority.



It was finally passed in that body within ten days of the adjournment, which placed it in the class of bills that the Governor was not required to act upon during the session. He held it until a week or ten days after the adjournment when he signed it, and the great tax battle was won, and the Pennsylvania Railroad was enabled to start on its matchless career. The company did not profit in freight charges by the repeal of the tax, as the act required that the freight charges in Pennsylvania should be reduced the full measure of the tax.

For nearly half a century the Pennsylvania Railroad has been the central figure of Pennsylvania progress. It has been the safety of the State in war and its greatest inspiration to progress in peace. If the State had given it its charter with all securities and property entirely free from taxation, it would have been repaid in score of millions by the wealth it added to our great State, but it has steadily paid a very liberal proportion of taxes, and often taxes which were alike unjust and oppressive.

For a period of nearly a quarter of a century no legislator from Allegheny could cast a vote approaching justice to this great corporation without making himself a political suicide. Allegheny, like Philadelphia, had subscribed to the capital stock of the company, and issued bonds to raise the money paid for the shares, expecting that the company would pay dividends on the stock and thereby relieve Allegheny from any taxation for interest on the bonds. It was not possible for a company, struggling with an always depleted treasury to construct a great railway line, to pay dividends on its stock, and the prejudice of the people against the company in Allegheny County became so inflamed by the appeals of repudiation leaders that the authorities of the county



refused to levy taxes for the payment of the interest on the bonds, and when finally ordered to do so by the supreme court of the State, the commissioners preferred being committed to prison for contempt of court to providing means of paying the over-due interest.

Men climbed into Congress and into the State senate and house as repudiation leaders in Allegheny, and the prejudices of that contest asserted their mastery in legislation relating to the company. Indeed, from the day that the struggle began in the Legislature, in 1846, for the passage of the charter for the company, until after its release from the oppressive tonnage tax in 1861, this now great corporation, then in feeble infancy, was compelled to brave intense prejudices against all corporation progress, no matter how beneficent were the fruits promised.

After 1861, a new epoch with entirely new conditions and entirely new duties of the gravest character, confronted our people, and the supreme necessities of war, with the wonderful progress born of such necessities, gave for the first time something like a fair field for our great corporation to develop the untold millions of wealth it has given to Pennsylvania.



## XIV.

## PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD PRESIDENTS.

Mr. Merrick, First President, Wearied of the Labor and Retired—Patterson, his Successor, the only President of the Company Defeated for Re-election—J. Edgar Thompson's Great Work in Completing the Line—The Fortunate Combination of Thompson and Scott—Scott was a Master Builder and Conceived and Largely Created the Great Pennsylvania System—Roberts, an Accomplished Engineer and Thorough Operator of the Great System, Succeeded Scott—Frank Thomson, One of the most Accomplished Transportationists of his day, Succeeded Roberts, and Cassatt, First Great Railroad Man of the World To-day, Succeeded Thomson.

**T**O attempt to present the history of the wonderful progress that has been inspired in this State by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company without presenting the names and records of the men who have literally created the matchless achievements of this great corporation, would be like presenting the play of "Hamlet" with Hamlet omitted.

The company has always been fortunate in the choice of its presidents. Mr. Merrick, whom I remember when he conducted the business of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company chiefly or wholly in two second-floor rooms with the aid of a secretary and several clerks, was well adapted to plan and enforce the severe economical methods which had to be adopted to get the great enterprise fairly launched on the road to success. He voluntarily retired before the completion of the road, but after its success had been practically assured, and was succeeded by President Patterson, whose more progressive ideas laid some of the important foundations of the future success of the corporation.



J. Edgar Thompson



Patterson was the only president who retired from office defeated in a contest for re-election, as I have already explained in a previous chapter. Well equipped as he was as a business man and financier at that time, the period had been reached when the ripe railroad experience of J. Edgar Thompson was needed wisely to direct future development. He was regarded as one of the most accomplished engineers of the country, and not only well schooled in his professional attainments, but had liberal experience in the important work of operating railways. His election to the presidency dated the first great epoch of advancement in the history of the corporation, but for ten years he had a perpetual struggle against the aggressive hostility of the dominating prejudices in the State against all corporations.

I was brought into somewhat close relations with him because of the earnest support I gave, in both the house and senate, to inaugurate a more liberal State policy that would increase our railways, multiply wealth and add immensely to the prosperity of the State. The financial revulsion of 1857 continued to paralyze industry and trade until business was quickened soon after the inauguration of the Civil War.

Some time about 1861 when I was a member of the senate, he sent for me to explain the utter impossibility of operating the Philadelphia & Erie Railway to enable the company to pay expenses and the fixed charges on the mortgage of \$3,000,000 held by the State. There was no desire on his part to take any advantage of the Commonwealth for the benefit of his company, but the outlook for business was exceedingly discouraging, and while the Civil War was not generally expected, it was assumed in all channels of industry and trade that there would be



continued sectional agitation and distrust for years, which must result in continued restraint on any advancement toward prosperity.

He said that he believed it to be his duty to allow the State mortgage to be foreclosed and the road sold, which would have resulted in a very large loss to the State. It was at a period when the struggle for a more liberal railroad and corporation policy was making substantial progress, and I assured him that the sale of the Philadelphia & Erie, and the failure of the State to realize the full amount of its mortgage that had been so distinctly promised by all who advocated the sale of the State canals to the Erie corporation, would cause such a popular revulsion against railways and corporations generally, and especially against the Pennsylvania, that it would be much less costly to his corporate interests to suffer serious loss in the Philadelphia & Erie for years, than to foreclose with heavy loss to the Commonwealth.

He was most profoundly impressed with the danger to all his great railroad enterprises, and I remember him telling me that it seriously disturbed even his sleep. He said that it had lately brought to him a dream that greatly distressed him, as it presented him facing a bottomless chasm with no hope of escape. Colonel Scott was then vice-president, and Mr. Thompson's close adviser. After a full discussion of the subject he took a more hopeful view, and Mr. Thompson reluctantly assented to dismissing the idea of foreclosing the Philadelphia & Erie.

There never was a more fortunate combination than that of Thompson and Scott in the many struggles which confronted the Pennsylvania Railroad Company after Mr. Thompson's election. Thompson was naturally conservative, but his conservatism was well leavened with practical progress. He rendered a





George B. Roberts



service to the great corporation that no other man could have given at the time. He was thoroughly equipped for all the varied needs of the railway, alike in engineering, operating and financing, and when he began to reach the fruition of his wise direction after a decade of service he was accepted throughout the country as the foremost of our great railroad men.

The elder Vanderbilt had won fortune and success by the combination of weak railways and the intelligent perfection of a great system, but Thompson controlled only a single line in the State and was compelled to create all the tributaries needed to make it the great artery of Pennsylvania traffic. He lived to see his great corporation attain an unexpected measure of prosperity, and its profits became so great that a large extra stock dividend was declared.

Thompson was the conservative balance wheel that carefully regulated Scott's rapid development of a great trunk system. He kept his great corporation in the very forefront of railway advancement. So comprehensive were his plans for increased betterments and extensions in 1874 at the time of his death, all of which had been planned before the revulsion that began in 1873 was seriously felt, that one of the first acts of the board of directors after his death was to suspend some ten to twelve millions of improvements then in progress.

They had not been inconsiderately undertaken. The revulsion that began in 1873 was generally believed to be but a temporary disturbance in financial circles, and it was upon that theory that President Thompson proceeded, but in the early summer of 1874 continued liquidation throughout the country and in Europe created serious revulsion in finance and trade that continued to increase, paralyzing all the channels of industry and commerce, until it culminated in the terrible



riots of 1877, when a mob burned several millions of railroad property in Pittsburg, and Philadelphia narrowly escaped anarchy.

President Thompson finished his great work during several years of seriously broken health, and he stands to-day in the history of the corporation, and in the convictions of the great State whose wealth and grandeur he so largely aided in developing, as the man who laid the broad foundations for the wonderful superstructure that is now the greatest railway system of the world.

Thomas A. Scott was the logical successor of President Thompson, as they had stood shoulder to shoulder in advancing their great railway system for nearly half a generation, and he was chosen president at the first meeting of the board after the death of his predecessor, June 3, 1874. I knew Colonel Scott at an early period of his career, and I feel safe in saying that when occasion came to call out all his great attributes, as was the case in the Civil War, he developed as the greatest administrator of the age, and he was as keen in perception as he was great in execution.

He, and he alone, revolutionized the corporation policy of the State, and he did it because he possessed all the qualities necessary to crystallize men about him in every section, and enlist their earnest efforts in support of a beneficent system of progress. He may be justly credited as the one who first conceived and mainly executed the extension of the Pennsylvania system by lease and purchase until it had a completed through line, with superb terminal facilities, from New York to Chicago.

Looking over his work at this day and the remarkable progress that has grown out of the system he inaugurated, his extension of the Pennsylvania corporation would not seem to be an extraordinary



achievement; but when it is considered how feeble were the resources of the Pennsylvania Railroad at that day, and what grave responsibilities had to be assumed on the faith of future development of trade, the extension of the Pennsylvania was one of the most heroic business achievements of the century.

When he finally accomplished the lease of the Camden and Amboy, giving a through line to New York with terminal facilities, which could hardly have been acquired outside of that corporation, he startled business and financial circles, and President Thompson hesitated many weeks before he signed the lease; but he was finally induced to hasten its execution by the well-founded apprehension that even a larger rental would be offered by the Reading for the lines to New York.

While Thompson was a master in planting the firm foundation for our great railway system, Scott was the tireless and heroic architect who hastened the creation of the structure, and is fairly entitled to the credit for the conception and execution of the policy that has made the Pennsylvania Railroad Company the greatest of all our railway systems.

Colonel Scott was a man of wonderful versatility. His capabilities thoroughly equipped him to make a great military commander or to reach the highest rank of statesmanship or diplomacy, and he was one of the most sagacious of politicians.

The night after the battle of Bull Run, when all were demoralized in Washington, Scott, then Assistant Secretary of War, was the one man who stood in the forefront with President Lincoln, General Scott, Secretary Cameron and others around him, and his heroic movements for the safety of the Capital, usually without waiting for advice or consultation, commanded such a measure of admiration from General Scott that he urged the assistant secretary to accept a high com-



mand in the army. He was a man of wonderful physical vigor, of compact and symmetrical form, and capable of most extraordinary endurance.

I remember when the North was cut off from Washington by the Baltimore riots, and the State authorities were without information from Washington for two or three days; troops were hurried forward over the Pennsylvania, and I saw him sit by a single battery in the State Capitol for thirty-six hours, without sleep or rest, during which time he ran every train of the Pennsylvania Railroad west of Harrisburg out on schedule time, exclusively by his own orders, and never kept a record of the location of different trains.

Sleep was impossible at a time of such appalling peril, but the severe strain of running every train on 250 miles of railroad by telegraphic orders would have broken an ordinary man. He was a master politician, and for nearly twenty years, beginning with 1860, he enjoyed the personal confidence of the leaders of State and nation of every political faith, and neither of the two great parties ever nominated an important State ticket without very full conference with Scott.

His career as president of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, beginning in 1874 just when the revulsion of 1873 was making itself severely felt, and ending in 1880 before there was any recovery of material prosperity, marked no great advance in the progress of the corporation, as existing conditions required a scrupulously careful and economical direction of the railway interests.

His great work had been accomplished with Mr. Thompson, and as president he was compelled to struggle continuously with prostrated business and industrial interests. Sadly broken health compelled him to resign his office June 1, 1880, and on the 21st of May, 1881, death gave him the rest that life had long refused to him.



George B. Roberts was the natural successor of President Scott and was unanimously chosen on the 1st of June, 1880. He held the position commanding the unbounded confidence of his railway associates and of financial interests throughout the world. He was a trained engineer, strongly inclined to conservatism, and was certainly the most capable man to fill the presidency during the particular period in which he served.

The strain on railway interests had been very severe, requiring the most conservative direction, and with the exception of a brief period of somewhat improved industrial conditions beginning in 1882, he was confronted with the drags of the revulsion of 1873, and was compelled to pass through the more severe general paralysis of industry and trade beginning in 1893.

He was a man of different type from Colonel Scott, and probably would not have conceived and executed the extension of the great corporation when Scott did, but he was the ablest man of all to operate the great railway system in times of severe trial, and yet when occasion clearly demanded heroic action he was fully equal to it, as was exhibited in his successful capture of the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad, when young Garrett, of the Baltimore & Ohio, believed that he was about to consummate its purchase; and also in his building of the Pennsylvania line through the Schuylkill Valley, as not only a measure of protection, but as a warning to competitors who were continually breaking faith and reducing the revenues of the company by unnecessary and ruinous reductions of rates.

He was a man of the sternest integrity, pre-eminent in all the qualities of an engineer, and his ripe experience in administrative affairs enabled him to write a record as president of the company for the period of



seventeen years, that will make his personality and his achievements long memorable in railway and business circles. His special attention was given not only to the wise and careful financing of the interests under his charge and to their protection against the assaults of rival systems, but to the development of the territory tributary to the main line and the construction of feeders, that built up its enormous local traffic and have made its prosperity largely independent of the fluctuations of through business.

Frank Thomson, then first vice-president of the company, was unanimously chosen to succeed Mr. Roberts as president on the 30th of February, 1897, but his untimely death, within a very few years after he had entered upon his new duties, gave him only a brief career to display his abilities in the direction of the greatest railway enterprise of the country.

He was not in any degree a kinsman of J. Edgar Thompson, and won his rapid advancement in the corporation by exhibiting in every position to which he was called the highest measure of administrative qualities. He had served a regular apprenticeship in the Altoona shops of the company, and was thus able to master all the varied details of equipment and transportation. When the Civil War began he was not yet twenty years of age, but Colonel Scott, who had been called to Washington to take charge of the military railways and telegraphs of the United States, chose Mr. Thomson as his chief assistant, and he exhibited extraordinary ability. He was often compelled to act without opportunity for consultation, but no emergency arose to which he did not appear to be equal, and often regardless of the limited resources at his command. He was soon accepted as absolute authority in all railroad movements for military purposes.

He exhibited all the quick perception and swift





Frank Thompson



execution of his great chief to whom he was romantically attached. When desperate movements were made in the early part of the war which might require the rapid repair of railways, Mr. Thomson would accompany the army, sharing every privation. When an army of 20,000 men had to be transported from the East to rescue our besieged forces at Chattanooga, Mr. Thomson was put in charge of the lines south of Nashville, where the greatest difficulties and dangers were to be met, and he startled the besieging enemy that regarded Rosecrans as absolutely within its grasp, by suddenly hurling a great army in itself to the relief of our cooped-up and starving soldiers.

In 1864 he resigned his direction of the military railways, as he had trained a very competent force equal to all the duties required, and took his first position with the Pennsylvania Railroad Company as superintendent of the Eastern division of the Philadelphia & Erie. Later he headed the management of the Oil Creek Railroad, one of the most important lines in the State; in March, 1873, became superintendent of motive power for the Pennsylvania Company; was promoted to general manager of the entire Pennsylvania system east of Pittsburg, to the second vice-presidency in 1882, to the first vice-presidency in 1888, and on February 3, 1897, succeeded Mr. Roberts as president of the company.

He was a thoroughly trained master alike in the construction, operating and mechanical departments of his railway, was familiar with the most minute details and workings of every channel of his great enterprise, and was accomplished and tactful in meeting all the many great questions presented for solution by one of the greatest corporations of the world. No condition arose during his presidency offering opportunity to test his ability in meeting any great departure in the



railway policy of the country, but he fulfilled every duty of his high office with consummate ability, and his unexpected death brought sorrow not only to the community generally, but a profound sense of personal bereavement to all of the scores of thousands connected with the great corporation from the highest to the humblest.

Alexander J. Cassatt, who succeeded Mr. Thomson, has developed the third great epoch in the history of the Pennsylvania corporation. The first was created by J. Edgar Thompson, who laid the great foundation for the present grandest of all railway systems, after a full decade of desperate struggle against adverse prejudice which at times exhibited malignant hostility. The second was largely the creation of Colonel Scott, who inaugurated the immense extensions of the Pennsylvania lines, and the third has been created by President Cassatt, who has made a new departure as heroic, even in the present progressive age, as was Colonel Scott's conception and execution of his great trunk line policy forty years ago. Like all the great architects of the greatest and best organized railway system of any country, Mr. Cassatt started at the lower round of the ladder in his work, and won his advancement solely by his pre-eminent abilities.

I first met him when he was a rodman on the Philadelphia division of the Pennsylvania Railroad, but he soon won the title of assistant engineer, then resident engineer, superintendent of the Warren & Franklin Railroad, superintendent of motive power and machinery on the Philadelphia & Erie and later on the Pennsylvania, general manager of all the Pennsylvania lines east of Pittsburgh and Erie, third vice-president and first vice-president, in all of which positions he exhibited the highest type of administrative capacity.





*A. J. Cassatt*



In 1882 he resigned the office of first vice-president, not because of any difference in the direction, but because, as he stated at the time, his only object was to be released from the exacting responsibilities which he had seen destroy the vigor of a number of his associates. He loved his home, his farm, his horses, and he wanted rest. I well remember his discussion of the subject at the time of his retirement, when he spoke most feelingly of the sacrifices which had been made of health, and even of life, in building up the great Pennsylvania Railroad, and he had decided to escape the penalty of such incessant and wearing service. He continued as a director of the company, and was the close adviser of Presidents Scott, Roberts and Thomson.

The death of President Thomson occurred at a time when new and most important problems were forming and had to be solved by the great railroad men of the country, and Mr. Cassatt was compelled to give a reluctant consent to assume active railroad duties as president. What he has accomplished need not here be presented in any detail. He has gone through the greatest railway struggle of modern times, and has emerged from it with his great system in the most complete condition it has ever been in, with its financial strength equal to all the heavy exactions made upon it without impairment, and the long, fretful and costly problem of cut-rate confusion, that has been so disastrous to solvent railroads for many years, has been finally solved.

The new epoch that President Cassatt has created required a call for \$90,000,000 to tunnel into New York and make his great system safe for fair dealing and fair rates. It was a movement at once heroic in conception and execution, but the absolute confidence of his security holders, of financiers and of the general business public, gave him prompt and complete suc-



cess when very many of the great corporations of the country were in need of financial aid and unable to command it. His new policy is now an accomplished fact, and his 11,000 miles of transportation lines, whose annual earnings are nearly treble the entire revenues of the nation when Lincoln became President, are to-day more securely anchored to assure permanent and liberal results to the security holders, than it has ever been in all its past history, under the leadership of the first railroad man of the world.



## XV.

## THE PHILADELPHIA AND READING.

Originally Chartered in 1833—Designed Solely as a Coal Line—Originally not Constructed for Passenger Traffic—John Tucker, the Thomas A. Scott of the Reading—Charles E. Smith's Presidency—Service Rendered the Government During the Civil War—Stock Fluctuated from \$2 $\frac{1}{2}$  in 1864, to \$1.25 in 1896—Franklin B. Gowen, the Brilliant Railway Man, Ahead of his Time—President McLeod's Struggle—Chief Justice Paxson Resigns to become a Reading Receiver in 1893—Rescued from Bankruptcy and Restored to a Sound Basis by President George F. Baer.

I HAVE stated that the administration of Governor Shunk witnessed the advent of the railroad to assert its mastery in the matter of transportation. He signed the charter for the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, the first through line that was ever attempted on a solid basis. There were several railways constructed before that period, including the Philadelphia & Reading, the Philadelphia & Columbia, the Philadelphia & Norristown, the Cumberland Valley and other fragments which have since been absorbed in great lines, but none of them contemplated a through line of railway from the eastern seacoast to the waters of the Ohio.

Of these the only one of vital importance in the development of the industry and trade of the State was the Reading. It was originally chartered in 1833 with authority to build a railway line from Philadelphia to Reading. The single object of this railway was to reach the anthracite coal region. The line was expected to be completed from Philadelphia to Pottsville by connection with the Little Schuylkill



Navigation Railroad and Coal Company chartered in 1826, with a supplemental charter in 1829, authorizing it to extend its railroad to Reading.

By merging with several local companies, and an enlargement of its charter in 1838, a continuous line from Philadelphia to Pottsville was completed in 1842. No thought of making the Reading part of a through line, or of adapting it to general passenger business, seems to have been entertained by those who labored so industriously against fearfully adverse circumstances to create it.

The road bed was graded only twenty-two feet wide, sufficient for a double track coal road, as passenger traffic was regarded as simply an incident, and the entire line was constructed on dead level or down-grade from the coal mines to the city of Philadelphia, so that the motive power required to take the empty cars back from the city to the coal mines was sufficient to bring the same cars loaded to the market. So rapidly did the coal trade increase that the early laying of a double track became a necessity.

The space between the tracks was only four feet, which did not permit of the passage of ordinary passenger cars. As the passenger traffic grew into some importance, special passenger cars had to be built with a seat for two on one side of the aisle, and one on the other. It was not until 1862 that the tracks were moved sufficiently apart to permit the passage of passenger cars of ordinary width, and in 1885 an additional foot was added between the lines.

The necessary increase in the trackage of the line involved the company heavily in debt, and Mr. John Cryder, president of the company, went to Europe to obtain a loan of several millions, but was unsuccessful in his efforts. Mr. John Tucker, whom I met many times as president of the Reading, and well



remember the distinguished service he rendered the country as successor to Colonel Scott in charge of the military railroads and transportation, was then the active salesman of a large Philadelphia importing house, the head of which was interested in the Reading, and he advised President Cryder to send Tucker to England as the best man to accomplish the loan.

When he appeared in London the financial men of that staid, conservative city were extremely shy about meeting a boy unknown in finance in a transaction of such importance, but he gradually won his way with them, and secured the loan in 1844, and was soon thereafter elected president of the company. In one year he had the second track completed, and two years thereafter, in January, 1847, the Reading paid its first dividend of 10 per cent. to its stockholders.

There was a gradual paralysis of business beginning early in the 50's that culminated in the panic and general suspension of 1857. President Tucker was regarded by the more conservative investors as somewhat reckless as a financier, and the result was his retirement in 1856, when Richard D. Cullen was elected president, and in October, 1857, the Reading Railway suspended payment with the general suspension that followed the closing of President Alibone's Bank of Pennsylvania.

In 1860 Asa Whitney succeeded to the presidency, but served only a single year. In 1861 Mr. Charles E. Smith succeeded to the head of the corporation just after the attack on Fort Sumter, and he held the position during the entire period of the war, and for several years thereafter. He rendered a very great service to the government by his prompt supply of anthracite coal for government purposes.

At one time in 1862 when both anthracite coal and



transportation were not equal to the demand, as the government was using 10,000 tons a day, he had to give preference to the government contractors, often to the sore experience of manufacturers, and had to trust the government until the indebtedness for transportation reached nearly \$1,000,000, which was finally paid in seven-thirty bonds.

The war period brought the high water-mark of prosperity to the Reading Railway. On April 7, 1864, its stock sold on the market at  $82\frac{5}{8}$  per share. A 15 per cent. dividend had been declared in November of that year, which was paid in stock as the money, although fully earned, was needed to increase the facilities of the corporation.

The strange fluctuations and ragged career of the Reading Railway Company is exhibited in the sale of its stock in 1864 at  $82\frac{5}{8}$  on \$50 paid, and on January 10, 1896, after an assessment of \$10 per share had been paid in a former reorganization, the stock sold in Philadelphia at \$1.25 per share on \$60 paid. President Smith did not lose sight of the fact that he was dealing with an inflated currency, and when he issued stock dividends he paid out the shares on the basis of \$50 in gold.

His financial policy was severely criticised, and he then adopted the policy of giving his shareholders the choice of accepting the dividends in cash paid in lawful currency, or receiving the dividends in stock on a gold basis, and nearly all of the shareholders accepted the stock. So successful was his corporation that in 1865, when the government was willing to receive money on call and pay 6 per cent. for it, he made a deposit of \$2,500,000 with the United States Treasurer, and some time thereafter, having occasion to purchase some \$300,000 worth of rolling stock, he called upon the United States Treasurer for that





George F. Baer



proportion of his deposit, and was greatly surprised when the Treasurer informed him that he couldn't pay it. He begged President Smith to try and make other arrangements.

It is not surprising that the government was short of money at that time, notwithstanding its extraordinary resources from bonds and taxes, as the war was then costing nearly or quite \$4,000,000 a day. Smith's company was in excellent credit, and he made a temporary loan from the Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank, and paid it at expiration of sixty days. It stands out very distinctly to the credit of President Smith that this loan from the Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank was the only floating debt he ever contracted as president of the Reading Railroad Company during his management of that great corporation, beginning May 1, 1861, and ending with his resignation in July, 1869, when he was succeeded by Franklin B. Gowen.

President Smith was a man of very quiet manners, of the sternest integrity, and certainly proved his great capacity as the manager of what had become a most important railway corporation. He retired because pressure came for a new departure in the Reading railway system, one of wild expansion that could not but be fearfully dangerous when undertaken in the high tide of inflation, and from the time of his retirement until his death he had no release from the distress that the new policy of the company gave him.

He was a constant visitor at the Union League, where he was a prominent member, and in the highest tide of apparent prosperity under President Gowen, he constantly and with intense interest deplored the headlong strides of the new policy to destruction, and he lived to see his worst prophesies crystallized in the saddest annals of our financial revulsions.



The retirement of President Smith brought to the surface one of the most brilliant and most unfortunate of our great railway men in the person of Franklin B. Gowen. He had been eminently successful at the bar and had his training in the heart of the anthracite region. He was a man of unusually fine presence, with a face of uncommon manly beauty, heroic in purpose and brilliant in execution, and all who were in immediate contact with him soon fully shared his grand anticipations of future wealth by the expenditure of many millions in the purchase of coal mines, and organizing a coal company that has rarely if ever presented a gratifying balance sheet to the shareholders.

In 1875 when I was chief editor of "The Times," and giving special attention to the paralysis that was creeping upon all business and industrial channels since the beginning of the panic of 1873, I called upon President Gowen and urged him to reduce his dividends. I had been entirely convinced from many conversations I had had with ex-President Smith that the Reading Company could not continue to pay 8 per cent. dividends unless there should be a speedy revival of business.

Many of our industrial establishments were then curtailing their production. The wages of labor were being gradually reduced, and I made an earnest appeal to President Gowen to reduce his dividends on the single ground that the industries of the country could not afford to make such contribution to his corporation as would enable him to pay the large dividend. I well remember the silver tone of his laugh as he informed me in his fascinating way that he owed it to his stockholders, who had not received regular dividends, to pay at least 8 per cent., and he closed his remarks by saying that at a certain season of the year he could earn it in a month or six weeks.



In addition to becoming the owner of immense beds of coal to furnish future freights, he extended his line by the lease of the North Pennsylvania Railroad in 1879, and as that company then held the Delaware & Bound Brook Railroad under lease, he reached the New York market with terminal facilities in Jersey City, but one year later, on May 21, 1880, the long gathering storm broke, and he gave up the road to a receivership.

Franklin B. Gowen wrote a very remarkable record in the history of Pennsylvania progress. Like many other men he was in advance of his time, and but for the large coal properties the corporation now owns, and which precipitated the company into bankruptcy, the present comparatively prosperous condition of the corporation, and its great promise of permanent prosperity in the future, would not exist.

He was one of the most accomplished trial lawyers of the Pennsylvania bar, and his prosecution, conviction and final execution of the Molly Maguire murderers, whose political power had given them every promise of immunity when they were prisoners at the bar, stands out high over all the legal attainments recorded in the jurisprudence of the State.

Notwithstanding his failure in 1880, there was universal confidence in the personal integrity of Gowen, and a decided majority of those interested in the corporation re-elected him president in 1882, but his resources were impaired, his credit broken, and he was compelled to retire again in 1884, and George DeB. Keim was chosen president, but in six months thereafter was compelled to yield to a second receivership.

In January, 1886, Mr. Gowen was again, for the third time, called to the presidency. There was faith in the man, faith in his unfaltering belief, in his great



work and in himself, but he was confronted with insuperable obstacles, and after serving nine months he was compelled to confess that he could not rehabilitate his great corporation. He retired and was succeeded by Austin Corbin, whose advent was followed by an assessment of \$10 a share. This simply gave a little fresh financial vigor to the corporation, without placing it anywhere in sight of a solid basis.

Corbin struggled for four years without success, when he gave way to A. A. McLeod, who started out on what seemed to be a most brilliant career, leasing the Lehigh Valley, Central Railroad of New Jersey, extending his lines throughout the entire length of New England, and making himself president of one of the largest systems of the continent, but he had a very brief season of apparent success, as in less than three years from the time he entered upon the office of president, the third financial storm broke over the ill-fated Reading, the share and security holders of the Reading alone losing \$40,000,000 in a single week.

The corporation was then placed in the hands of receivers, and Chief Justice Paxson, of our supreme court, resigned his position to serve as president of the board of three receivers, as it was then generally accepted that the corporation must remain in the hands of receivers until it could be placed upon a sound financial basis. In December, 1895, another assessment of \$10 a share was levied upon the stock, and in 1896 the whole property of the corporation was sold by order of the United States Circuit Court, and reorganized under the franchise of its old charter, and the name changed to Reading Railway Company.

After President Gowen's second attempt to rehabilitate the company, and after he had been called to the presidency for the third time, he seemed to have



given up all hope of ever reaching the fulfillment of his bright dreams of the success of the enterprise to which he had devoted the best years of his life with unfaltering fidelity. He ceased to be a factor in Reading affairs and was unknown and unfelt in its direction.

I saw him many times in the retirement that he then sought as he quietly devoted himself to the practice of his profession, when he would visibly struggle to bring the old fascinating smile back on his finely molded face, but he could not conceal the heartsore that was steadily draining his vitals, and I was not greatly surprised one morning, when on a visit to Washington, where I met him the evening before, to learn that in a moment of utter despair, with his own hand, he had sent the deadly bullet crashing into his own brain.

In 1893 the Reading Railway went into the hands of Chief Justice Edward W. Paxon, Joseph S. Harris and John Lowber Welsh, as receivers, with Harris as president of the company. Two unsuccessful attempts had been made to obtain control of the Central Railroad of New Jersey, and thereby secure a line of railway to New York. Both Mr. Gowen and Mr. McLeod failed in their efforts, because the plan of leasing was declared illegal. In the winter of 1900 Mr. George F. Baer advised a purchase of a majority of stock of the Central Railroad of New Jersey by the Reading Company. This was done in December, 1900.

Mr. Harris continued as president of the company until 1901, when he was succeeded by George F. Baer, the present incumbent, who brought to his position preeminent ability and executive qualities, the ripest legal training and practical business experience, with a thorough knowledge of all the ramifications of the Reading system.



He was born in the mountains of Somerset County in 1842. At the age of thirteen he learned the printing trade in the office of the Somerset "Democrat." Later, with his brother Henry, he became the owner of the paper. His brother enlisted when the war began, and he remained at home for a year, during which time he conducted the paper and studied law at night. A year later, when he was twenty years of age, he raised a company of volunteers, was chosen captain, hastened to the front, and served in Humphrey's division of the Army of the Potomac, and participated in all the engagements of that army, beginning with the second battle of Bull Run and ending at Chancellorsville, where he was detailed as adjutant general of the Second Brigade.

He returned from the war in 1864, resumed his legal studies, was admitted to the Bar, and in 1868 he removed to Reading, where he rapidly rose to distinction in his profession. In 1870 he became local counsel for the Reading Company, and for a number of years managed its great iron property in that city with great success. He soon became a director of the company, but he differed from President McLeod in his rapid expansion policy and resigned from the management. He had for years been the confidential legal adviser of J. Pierpont Morgan in all matters relating to his Pennsylvania interests, and when the new reorganization was completed, in April, 1901, he was chosen president of the Reading Company and also of the Central Railroad Company of New Jersey.

He is in hearty accord with the general railroad policy of the country that has perfected railroad combinations which give some assurance of safety to the thousands of millions of railway securities held by the people of this country, and with him at the head of this corporation the highest measure



of public confidence is commanded for its future. He has been more largely in public evidence during the labor and railway troubles of late years than any of the other railroad magnates, and he was made so not only because his company was more immediately interested, but because he was regarded as the safest representative of his class to meet the new and threatening conditions which confronted it.

He was at times criticised as needlessly bold in his utterances, but he has not given a public expression relating to the trouble which confronted transportation companies that was not well considered, and that was not wisely made. He is very thorough in all the details of whatever business is entrusted to him; thoroughly safe and conservative, without the narrowness that is so often associated with those qualities, and there is not a railroad president in the country who more thoroughly understands the resources and capabilities of his corporation, or who could give more intelligent, tireless devotion to the performance of his official trust.

With his important system protected from the policy of irresponsible cut-throats, as now seems to be accomplished, the holders of Reading securities have the best assurance that their great property is certain to advance steadily in prosperity, assuring the best results alike to the public and to investors.

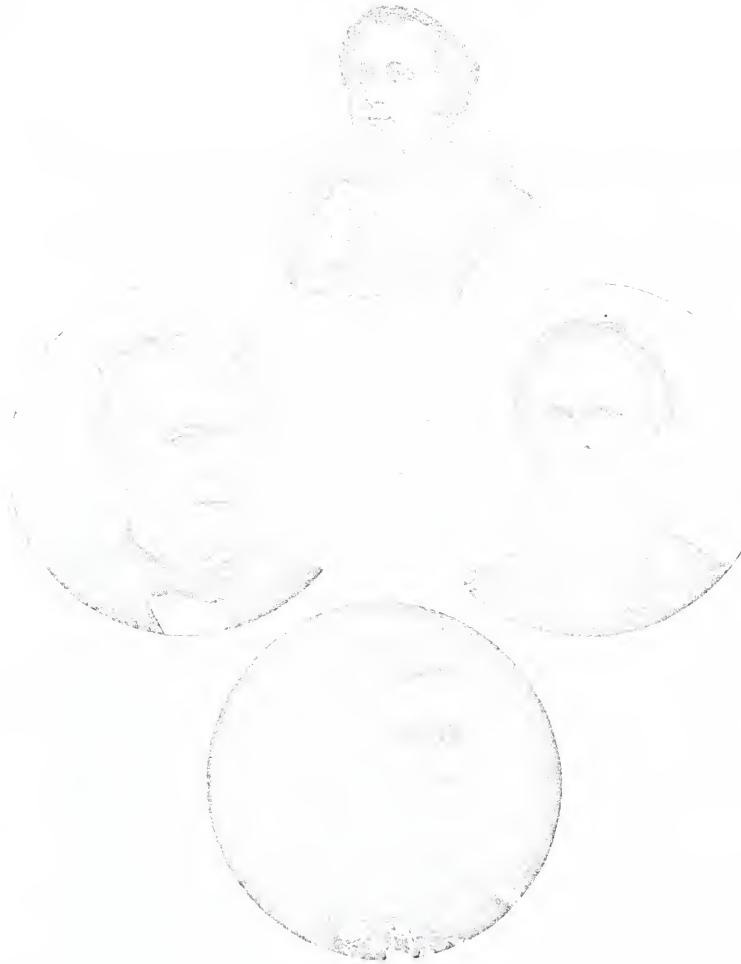
The Reading Railway, although in advance of the Pennsylvania Company, was a close second to the now greatest of our railway corporations in establishing the mastery of railway transportation in Pennsylvania, and the company that was founded with the single idea of having a downhill railway from the anthracite coal region to the Philadelphia market, now not only ramifications into every center of the anthracite region, but has its through line to the lakes, to



the great commercial emporium of New York, and to the seashore at Atlantic City.

With all the rapid growth of railroad development it stands second in our great Commonwealth in the wonderful achievements begun in 1846 to change our transportation system from the turnpike and canal to the railway train, until the song of the iron horse is heard in almost every valley and on every hill top of Pennsylvania.





Governors under Constitution of 1838

William F. Packer

Andrew G. Curtin

John W. Geary

John F. Hartranft



## XVI.

## GOVERNORS SHUNK AND JOHNSTON.

Shunk Re-elected in 1847—Johnston Chosen a Whig Senator at same Election—Whig Contest for Governor between General Irvin and Representative Cooper—Irvin Nominated and Defeated—Shunk's Health Broken into Hopeless Decline in Winter of 1848—Johnston made Speaker of the Senate at close of his First Session because he was Preferred for Governor—Shunk Resigned on a Sunday, the Last Day he could Resign to bring an Election the Same Year—Johnston became Governor—Nominated by the Whigs and Elected over Morris Longstreth by 297 Majority.

GOVERNOR SHUNK was unanimously nominated for re-election in 1847. His strength with the people was confessed by the Whigs, as Shunk was well known throughout the State as a thoroughly honest Governor and he commended himself to public favor by his severely unostentatious exhibition of authority. He was averse to innovations of any kind; would have been appalled at any suggestion of violent progress, and he taught and sincerely believed that the simplest government, the government that governed least, was always the best. The Democrats, still smarting under the severe defeat of 1846, realized that they had a desperate battle before them to re-elect Shunk in 1847. The Democratic organization of that day was led by men of great ability with ripe experience in politics, and with a fidelity to the party interests that is seldom seen in the modern management of the organization.

The Whigs were very confident of defeating Shunk and winning control of the State government, and a very animated contest was made for the Whig



nomination by the friends of ex-Congressman James Cooper, of Adams, and of ex-Congressman James Irvin, of Centre. Cooper was then speaker of the house and had previously served in Congress. He was a very ready and much more than ordinarily strong debater and was pointed to by the Whigs generally as one of the few able campaigners of the party. His cause was championed by the more aggressive Whigs, who insisted that the old rule of keeping candidates under cover during campaigns should be abandoned and that Cooper should be given the flag of the party with the assurance that he would canvass the State on the hustings from Lake Erie to the Delaware.

Cooper was a native of Maryland, but had located at Gettysburg soon after he was admitted to the bar, had practised there when Stevens was at the zenith of his power, and he very heartily entered into the contest for the Whig nomination, openly declaring that the candidate should make his plea directly to the people in every part of the State. General Irvin was an ironmaster of considerable wealth at that time, although he died poor some years later. He was a man of high character, of broad, practical intelligence, but painfully modest on public occasions, and could not deliver a campaign speech.

The contest between Irvin and Cooper was one of the most earnest in the history of the Whig party. It was conceded that Cooper could take the stump, while Irvin could not, but it was claimed by Irvin's friends that he most distinctly represented the industrial interests of the State which had been prostrated by the tariff of 1846, and that sentiment finally prevailed by a decided majority. The election of delegates in the city of Philadelphia was held but a short time before the meeting of the con-



vention; the business men of the city gave nearly a united support to Irvin and he carried nearly, if not quite, a solid delegation. The decision of Philadelphia ended the contest and Irvin was nominated on the first ballot. Cooper appeared in the convention and declared that he would look above the candidate to the flag of the party and give his best efforts to win the victory.

The Whig party had many highly respectable leaders, but at no time in its history in Pennsylvania could the Whig leaders cope with the Democratic leaders in practical politics. Indeed, the Whig party was the most delectable organization that ever existed. It was so highly respectable that it seldom won elections, but was pre-eminent in leading an opposition to Democratic authority. Had the Whigs made an aggressive campaign in 1847 it is quite likely that they would have won out, but they committed the strange and fatal blunder of deciding upon a very quiet canvass, assuming that the industrial people of the State were sufficiently interested to vote without great demonstrations, and hoping thereby to get the Democratic party at an advantage, as it would be lulled into security by the apparent inactivity of the Whigs.

Thomas E. Franklin, of Lancaster, later attorney general, was chairman of the Whig State committee, and did little more than send circulars to the county and district leaders of the State, advising them to make no demonstration of aggressive interest in the campaign, but to quietly see that the Whig voters were brought to the polls. The Democrats were then, as they have always been when the Democratic party was in anything approaching a hopeful condition, natural voters, and voted much more readily than the Whigs. The result was that the Democrats



aroused their voters, brought them squarely into line, and re-elected Shunk by over 17,000 majority.

This election brought very prominently into public life William F. Johnston, of Armstrong County. He was originally a Democrat, and was elected to the house in 1840 as an Independent Democrat opposed to the financial policy of Van Buren. During the session of 1841, when the credit of the State trembled in the balance, he became the most aggressive leader of those who battled for the maintenance of State credit, and he was largely the author of the novel relief measure that was passed in 1841, and which solved the problem of maintaining the credit of the Commonwealth. He acted with the Whig party after that period, and in 1847 was nominated by the Whigs for the senate in a district that was strongly Democratic, but his personal popularity and adroit political management gave him the victory.

I well remember the attention that his appearance attracted in the senate when the body met in January, 1848. He was altogether the most imposing and attractive personality of the body, and, although there were many other able Whig leaders in the senate, he was deferred to as a leader from the first, and he became the practical leader of the majority of the body rather by invitation than by assumption.

The senate at the close of the session elected a speaker to serve during the recess, so that in case of a vacancy in the office of the Governor the speaker of the senate could succeed to the executive chair. It was an almost universal custom to elect as speaker at the close of each session one who had served two terms, and thus would be eligible to re-election at the meeting of the next Legislature and serve his last session as speaker of the body.

In no instance that I can recall had any party in



the senate before that time chosen as speaker at the end of the session a senator who was serving only in his first year; but new conditions arose soon after the meeting of the Legislature by the evident rapid decline of the health of Governor Shunk. Soon after his re-election, in the previous October, he developed an affection of the lungs, and the disease ran a rapid course, so that before the close of the session in the spring of 1848 it was universally accepted that in choosing the speaker of the senate to serve during the recess the man so chosen would become Governor of the State.

It was a rare compliment to Senator Johnston to find the old Whig leaders, with ripe legislative experience, give way to him for the speakership solely because he was regarded as the man most eminently fitted to fill the executive chair. This consideration, and this alone, called Johnston to the speakership of the body at the close of the session, and within two months after the adjournment the death of Governor Shunk called Johnston to the executive office.

Shunk had rapidly declined in health until the 9th of July, when a sudden and severe hemorrhage of the lungs utterly prostrated him and indicated unmistakably that he had but a few hours to live. It was Sunday and the last day on which Governor Shunk could vacate the Governorship to assure an election for his successor at the next annual election in October. The Constitution required that the vacancy must occur at least three calendar months before election day to enable the people to fill the office at the next general election, and July 9 was just three calendar months before the October election.

Governor Shunk was in the possession of all his mental faculties and fully understood that his end was close at hand, and he dictated his letter of resigna-



tion. It was written, I believe, by the Rev. Dr. DeWitt, then the leading Presbyterian minister of Harrisburg.

The following is the text of the resignation:

*To the People of Pennsylvania:*

It having pleased Divine Providence to deprive me of the strength necessary to further discharge the duties of your Chief Magistrate, to lay me on a bed of sickness from which I am admonished by my physicians and my own increasing debility that I am in all human probability never to arise, I resolve, upon mature reflection, under a conviction of duty, on this day to restore to you the trust with which your suffrages have clothed me, in order that you may avail yourselves of the provisions of the Constitution to choose a successor at the next general election. I, therefore, hereby resign the office of Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and direct this, my resignation, to be filed in the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

The resignation was promptly filed with the secretary of the commonwealth, and the office of the Governor at once became vacant. Had Governor Shunk not resigned that day Johnston would have served as Governor for a year and a half, and the resignation met the universal desire of the Democratic leaders to choose a Governor at the coming October election, not doubting that they could succeed in a Presidential year; but the result proved that the year thus fixed by Shunk's resignation for the election of Governor was the only one in many years when Johnston could have been successful.

Although the gubernatorial office became vacant on the 9th of July, Speaker Johnston did not appear at Harrisburg until the 26th, leaving a period of seventeen days in which Pennsylvania was absolutely without a Chief Executive. The same provision of the Constitution that provided for an election of State officers where vacancies occurred three months before the general fall election, was mandatory upon the



acting Governor to issue the writ for an election, and the statute enacted to carry these provisions of the Constitution into effect also provided that "the writ must be issued at least three calendar months before the election." Thus while Governor Shunk's resignation was fully three calendar months before the October election, there was no acting Governor on that day to issue the writ, and any day thereafter the new Governor could issue the writ only in direct conflict with the act of assembly.

It is quite probable that Governor Johnston could have been entirely successful in taking advantage of this statutory conflict with the fundamental law to continue himself in the office of Governor for one year beyond the time he would serve as speaker of the senate if an election were held at the October election. He could not issue the writ until after he had qualified as Governor, and after giving the subject careful consideration he decided that the Constitution was paramount and that it was his duty to issue the writ on the assumption that all doubts should be resolved in favor of the rights of the people.

When Shunk died and Johnston became Governor the universal Whig sentiment of the State called for his nomination. Under all ordinary conditions Mr. Cooper, who had been defeated the year before by General Irvin, would have been the Whig candidate for Governor without a serious contest, but the fact that the Whigs of the senate had departed from the established custom of the body to make a senator, in his first year of service, speaker of the body solely because he stood over all in qualifications for the gubernatorial chair, prevailed universally among the people, and Johnston was nominated as the Whig candidate for election by a unanimous vote.

He showed his disposition to harmonize the Whig



element by appointing James Cooper attorney general, in which position Cooper served until the next Legislature met in January, 1849, where he appeared again as a representative from Adams, and was again chosen speaker.

The contest for Governor in 1848 was one of the most earnest struggles in the history of the State. It was conducted on both sides on a very much higher plane than had been common in Pennsylvania politics. Johnston was his own leader and his own party manager. He was the first candidate for Governor who planned and carried into execution a systematic canvass, meeting the people and speaking in nearly every county. His presence was most commanding, his excellent knowledge of the people enabled him to fraternize with them much to his advantage, and his plain, incisive presentation of both State and National questions made him one of the most entertaining and instructive of public speakers. He was a man six feet two inches in height, and largely but symmetrically proportioned, with a florid countenance and features exhibiting exceptional individuality and strength.

Some of the partisan newspapers which felt that a campaign for Governor could not be run without personal scandal invented and published the story that Johnston was a drunkard. I heard him speak in one of the Juniata counties where an immense audience surrounded him on a beautiful afternoon, and after discussing State and National issues, he referred to the scandal that had been invented and published against him. His only answer was, as he drew his magnificent proportions up to their fullest height: "They call me a drunkard; *ecce homo.*" No further argument was needed to settle that scandal.

The Democrats had nominated as his competitor



Morris Longstreth, of Montgomery County, who had been born and reared in the same community with Shunk. He was then canal commissioner, was a competent, faithful and eminently useful member of the board, and his Quaker faith was regarded as greatly in his favor as a candidate. He was a man whose public and private records were absolutely blameless, and the contest was singularly exempt from defamation.

On the ticket with Johnston was Middleswerth as the Whig candidate for canal commissioner. Both were members of the State senate when they were nominated by the State convention, and Johnston had steadily and earnestly supported a measure demanded by the mining and manufacturing regions, for a ten-hour labor law, while Middleswerth had as earnestly opposed it. When the question was before the senate Johnston appealed to Middleswerth to stand with him in support of the measure. Middleswerth represented the German community of Union County where a day's labor was accepted from all as from daylight to dark, and he stubbornly refused to favor any legislation on the subject.

There was then very aggressive agitation in the mining sections of the State for a ten-hour labor law, and Middleswerth's opposition to that law defeated him. Seth Clover, the Democratic candidate, succeeded by some 3,000 majority. The contest for Governor was regarded as in doubt for nearly a week after the election, but Johnston kept very close watch on the returns wherever there were danger signals, and when the counties were all in and finally figured up he was elected by 297 majority, with a Whig Legislature that precluded the possibility of ousting him in a contest.

While the Democrats of the State were divided on



the Presidency, as Wilmot and others of the Free Soil Democrats of the northern counties made an open fight for Van Buren, the Free Soil Democratic candidate against Cass, the regular nominee for President, they were entirely united in support of Morris Longstreth for Governor. Wilmot and his followers took open grounds in favor of Longstreth, and it was a fair, square fight between two highly creditable candidates for Governor. Johnston's personal and aggressive leadership doubtless told materially in his favor, while Longstreth's quiet absence from the forum and the people naturally inspired no enthusiasm in the personality of their candidate.

It was the first political battle in the State in which a candidate for a State office had carried his own cause directly to the people, and Johnston was so superbly equipped for that duty that he certainly wrung victory from defeat by his own individual efforts in the campaign. His administration and general public career will require another full chapter of these notes.



## XVII.

## GOVERNOR WILLIAM F. JOHNSTON.

One of the Greatest and Ablest Administrators ever Elected Governor—Cooper Elected United States Senator—Early and Bitter Estrangement between Senator and Governor—Interesting Episode in Deal with Senator Best, who Voted for Himself for Speaker—Johnston Unanimously Nominated for Re-election—He made the First Thorough Canvass of the State—Defeated by the Christiana Riots.

THE great victory achieved by Governor Johnston made him the central figure of Pennsylvania politics. He was the first Whig Governor ever chosen by the people of the State, and the only other Whig who filled the gubernatorial chair was Governor Pollock, who was elected by a combination with the new secret American organization, commonly called the Know Nothings, when his two associates on the State ticket, George Darsie for canal commissioner, and Daniel M. Smyser for supreme judge, were both defeated by a large majority. He was looked to as the man who had organized and won his own triumph, and he was very generally accepted by his party as its acknowledged leader and chieftain.

When he was nominated for Governor by a unanimous vote, James Cooper, of Adams, who had been an aggressive candidate against General Irvin in 1847 for the Whig nomination, seeing that his gubernatorial aspirations were utterly hopeless, withdrew from the field, and it was generally understood by the Whig leaders that if Johnston won out and carried the Legislature Cooper should become United States Senator. He was then attorney general under Johnston, but



became a candidate for the house, was elected and was chosen speaker.

The Whigs controlled both branches of the Legislature by moderate majorities, but they had as allies a number of Native American members from Philadelphia, and they for some reason exhibited hostility to Cooper's election. Cooper appealed to Johnston to throw the influence of his administration in favor of Cooper's nomination and election, but Johnston refused, and maintained a strict neutrality in the contest. There were a number of Whig candidates, the most prominent of whom was Thaddeus Stevens, who had been a fellow-practitioner with Cooper for many years at the Adams County bar, but who had just then been elected to Congress from Lancaster, and Cameron, whose place was to be filled in the Senate, was also an earnest candidate, claiming that his support of the tariff policy should command the indorsement of the Whigs.

Cooper was naturally inclined to magnify the movements of those who were not cordially co-operating with him, and to cherish strong resentments. He was very sore over his defeat for Governor in 1847 by General Irvin, and certainly did not relish the sudden advent of Johnston, who burst upon the Whig horizon like a dazzling meteor and thrust all competitors to the rear.

Johnston maintained a dignified neutrality in the senatorial contest, and when Cooper won the nomination, and finally, with much difficulty, attained an election, his hostility to Johnston at once erupted like a fiery volcano.

I called upon him the morning after his election to the Senate to congratulate him on his success, and was surprised to find him break out in passionate denunciation of the Governor. He said it would be a strange



story to tell to the Whigs of Pennsylvania that a Whig United States Senator had to be elected without the aid of a Whig Governor.

From that time until both disappeared from public life Johnston and Cooper moved in unbroken estrangement. It was wholly the fault of Senator Cooper, who could, and certainly should, have co-operated with the administration; but he was a weak man, and speedily proved to all that he was unbalanced by the distinction he had attained. He was a fluent and adroit speaker, but he was not a man of forceful intellect and was greatly lacking in the important attribute for a political leader of well-balanced judgment. He petulantly opposed everything that Johnston proposed, and was naturally defeated in the selection of William M. Meredith for the Taylor cabinet.

Soon after the inauguration of Taylor he nominated William D. Lewis, certainly the foremost merchant of Philadelphia in his day, for collector of the port, and Cooper arrayed himself in desperate hostility to Lewis' confirmation. He was the only Whig Senator from the State, and he felt that he had the power to wreak vengeance upon Governor Johnston by defeating Lewis, but after delaying the confirmation for many weeks and exhausting himself to secure an adverse vote in the Senate, Lewis was finally confirmed by a decided majority, and that defeat of Senator Cooper reduced his influence to the minimum among his fellow Whig Senators.

He was practically unfelt in the Senate during the first eighteen months of his term, when he acquired new importance by the death of President Taylor and the succession of Fillmore. As Johnston and the Whigs generally of the State were hostile to the extension of slavery, and earnestly hostile to the compromise measures, Senator Cooper became at open variance with



his party by supporting the compromise measures of 1850, including the offensive fugitive slave act. As Johnston was defeated for re-election in 1851, Cooper was enabled to exert considerable influence with the Fillmore administration until its close in 1853, but he had neither support nor sympathy from the great mass of the Whigs of Pennsylvania.

At the end of his term, during which there was little in his record to be memorable, he left the State, and resumed his residence at his old home in Maryland. I last saw him at Harrisburg in the early part of the Civil War, when he appeared in Governor Curtin's office wearing a brand new brigadier's uniform. He was evidently broken in health, and had received the appointment of brigadier general of volunteers without expecting to assign him to a command, because it was believed that he might exert some influence in Maryland in the then desperate struggle for secession.

He appealed to Governor Curtin to exert his influence to have him assigned to duty, but the Governor had no position for him, and certainly could not ask for his appointment to the command of troops in the field, and General Cooper returned to Maryland, where he remained awaiting orders for a considerable period, and was finally assigned to duty at Camp Chase, Ohio, where he died in 1863.

Governor Johnston's political mastery in the State was never even seriously threatened by Senator Cooper's hostility, and he was all-powerful with the National administration until the death of Taylor, in July, 1850. When Fillmore suddenly changed the policy of the administration on the question of slavery, by supporting and forcing the passage of the compromise measures of 1850, Johnston did not in any degree conceal his hostility to the entire theory of the measures, and he denounced them openly and defiantly. He



was not only a man of unfaltering courage, but he was a man of the clearest and soundest judgment, and commanded the unbounded confidence of his political followers.

Soon after the passage of the compromise measures Webster, who was Secretary of State, visited Harrisburg and was received by the Governor and State authorities generally with becoming ceremony. Webster had become thoroughly infatuated with the idea of succeeding Fillmore as President, although his chief was a candidate for the same position, and he visited different sections of the country for the purpose of making speeches in defense of the compromise measures.

When Webster was received in the hall of the house of representatives before a large audience the Governor stood up in all the majesty of manhood as he introduced Webster, highly complimenting the great intellectual power of the guest, but distinctly asserting the great principles of freedom which were then regarded by himself and his followers as antagonized by the compromise measures. Webster spoke in a listless manner, lacking the usual force of the Great Expounder, evidently chilled by the visible fact that he was addressing an unsympathetic assembly.

Johnston's administration was one of the cleanest and best in the history of the Commonwealth. I regard him as the ablest administrator who has ever filled the gubernatorial chair, and he was called to that position just at a period when his thorough knowledge of the complicated affairs of the State and his sagacity in suggesting remedial measures were most needed.

He would not have made as great a war Governor as Curtin did because he did not possess the boundless sympathetic attributes which made Curtin's career so lustrous, but he would have met every great problem of the war with equal wisdom and courage. He was



the administration himself, and beyond his attorney general, to whom he looked at times for legal direction, he personally decided every question relating to the policy of the government.

He startled the Legislature and the people of the State by proposing the gradual reduction of the State debt, and he was successful in carrying the measure providing a sinking fund that, if maintained, would ultimately make the State free from the crushing debt that had only a few years before driven the great Commonwealth to the very verge of repudiation. It is his beneficent financial policy that has been maintained until to-day, when not only the entire debt of over \$40,000,000 in Johnston's time, but all the added debt of the Civil War, has been practically paid, as the securities in the sinking fund that was of Johnston's creation would now liquidate the debt within a few hundred thousand dollars, and the surplus in the treasury could readily spare the balance needed to make Pennsylvania absolutely free from all indebtedness.

The elections of 1849-50 were adverse to the Whigs in Pennsylvania, and Johnston had to deal with a Democratic house. The senate of 1851 had one Democratic majority. While the senate was Whig his administration was safe in its important financial and other progressive measures, but when, in the last year of his term, he was confronted with a Democratic senate, the power of the administration was seriously threatened. With the senate in harmony with him the house was impotent, and by a very shrewd political maneuver he won the control of the senate from the Democratic majority.

There had been a long battle between Columbia County and what is now Montour County over the question of dividing old Columbia and creating the



new county of Montour. The two sections had become intensely inflamed against each other, and Valentine Best had been elected senator from Danville, the Montour end, three years before, chiefly on the issue of erecting the new county. It was his last session and his last opportunity to win out on his new county scheme. If he remained in opposition to the State administration it was possible for him to pass the measure on a partisan issue by Democratic votes, but in that event he would have to run up against the Governor, who knew exactly how to defeat such political movements.

It was finally suggested to Senator Best that there was one way by which he could get his new county, and that was to make himself speaker of the senate by voting for himself and giving the administration the control of the finance and several other important committees. Senator Best well knew what such a political movement involved, and it was most humiliating for him to desert his party and make himself speaker by his own vote, but he felt that the end justified the means, and he accepted the contract.

It became whispered around that there would be some queer political doings when the senate was called to order, and the hall was crowded when the clerk rapped on his desk and called the new senators to be sworn. The Democrats had nominated J. Porter Brawley, of Crawford, for speaker, and the Whigs, to cover their contract with Best, nominated Senator Darsie, of Allegheny, the oldest of the Whig senators in service. I was fortunate in obtaining a seat quite close to Best, as I knew he was to be the central figure of the show.

Brawley came into his seat with a most unsteady gait. He knew that his defeat was inevitable, and he fortified himself for the ordeal by a copious supply of



stimulants. Brawley would not have been required to vote for himself if the Whigs had not made the combination with Best, as the courtesy was always observed in that body, when the contest for speaker was a square one between the two parties, and the dominant party had but one majority, for the two candidates for speaker each to vote for the other. The old-time senate many times stood 17 to 16, and the majority speaker was always chosen by the vote of the opposing candidate.

The first ballot gave Brawley 15; Darsie, 15, with Brawley, Best and Darsie scattering their votes, and on the second ballot the Whigs voted solidly for Best, and Brawley received 15 Democratic votes, but Best had not answered when his name was called, and just before the clerk was about to compute and announce the vote, Senator Best rose in his place in very obvious confusion and asked that his name be called.

The clerk called "Valentine Best," to which the senator responded "Valentine Best," and thus made himself speaker of the body. Some hisses came from the crowded lobby, and Brawley sat sullenly in his chair and refused to exhibit the usual courtesy of conducting his successful opponent to the chair, but Darsie, the defeated Whig candidate, promptly arose and led the new Speaker to the platform.

The result was that the administration controlled the senate, that the Montour County bill passed the senate by a single vote, and finally commanded sufficient Democratic support in the house to carry it through, when Governor Johnston promptly gave it his approval.

Best was burnt in effigy in the Columbia portion of his district, but he was heartily supported by the Montour people. He was refused the regular Democratic nomination for re-election, and Charles R. Buckalew,



then a young lawyer of Bloomsburg, in old Columbia, was made the regular Democratic candidate. Many of the Whigs of old Columbia and nearly all the people of Montour supported Best, who received within one or two of a unanimous vote in Danville, and close to a unanimous vote in the new county, but Luzerne, with a large Democratic majority, was part of the district, and Buckalew was brought to the senate to begin a great career as long the leading Democrat of the senate, as United States Senator, as foreign minister and finally as Congressman.

The campaign of 1851 for Governor aroused very general interest throughout the State. While there were a few Whigs who supported the Fillmore administration on the slavery policy, they were absolutely powerless in every section of the State.

I was a delegate in the convention that renominated Johnston. It met at Lancaster and was one of the ablest State conventions in the history of Pennsylvania politics. Johnston was there in person, and did not hesitate to declare that unless the compromise measures were denounced, and General Scott declared the Whig candidate for President, he would not accept the nomination. He was not an arrogant political master, but he knew that it was his own battle, and he wisely decided how it could best be won. He had nothing to expect from any voter who could be controlled by the National administration, but he had something to expect from the anti-slavery sentiment of the State.

He was unanimously nominated, and it was his own suggestion that made John Strohm, of Lancaster, his associate on the ticket as the candidate for canal commissioner, as Strohm represented more conspicuously than any other man who could have been taken the policy of unfaltering honesty in public trust.

When the platform was presented by Attorney



General Darrah, of Allegheny, a very prominent and fearless leader, a single voice was heard in opposition to it, and that came from the brilliant Jack Ogle, of Somerset, who had been beaten for re-election to Congress at the previous election, and had accepted a foreign mission from President Fillmore. He was an unusually handsome product of the glades of the Alleghenies, but he was generously convivial, and when he arose in his shirt sleeves, the summer heat having made his coat an uncomfortable appendage, he was allowed to be heard, and his protest was quite as jolly as it was earnest, but then the platform was adopted without a division.

Johnston entered into the battle in superb shape, and made a thorough canvass of the entire State. His competitor, Senator Bigler, of Clearfield, was a clean and able man, but lacking Johnston's positive individuality. Both were heard from day to day by great assemblies of people, and Johnston had his battle fairly won until the Christiana riots.

A few weeks before the election Mr. Gorsuch, of Maryland, with his son and a posse, came to Christiana, in Chester County, to capture several of his slaves, who were then fugitives. The result was a riot, in which Gorsuch was killed and his son seriously wounded. It was proved in the trial of Castner Hanway and others for treason, growing out of that riot, that Gorsuch had madly braved a negro mob, after having been notified by the mob that they would kill him if he attempted to enter the house in which the slaves were hiding, but the murder of a claimant for his own property, acting in accordance with the laws of the nation, caused a very serious revulsion in the commercial and business circles of the State.

Philadelphia then had the largest Southern trade of any of the Northern cities, and interwoven with it



were large business interests throughout the entire Commonwealth. It called to the front a class then known as Whig "Doughfaces," who regarded commerce as more important than political faith, and they went bodily to the support of Bigler. Johnston bravely struggled to stem the tide by issuing a proclamation offering a liberal reward for the detection and conviction of the murderers of Gorsuch, but the breach could not be healed, and Johnston was defeated by 8,000 majority.

He retired from office standing head and shoulders over all the Whig leaders of Pennsylvania, and was recognized throughout the entire country as one of the great men of the Whig organization. Had he been patient and bided his time he would have been called to high official trust, but he became engulfed in the Know Nothing political maelstrom of 1854. In 1858, after a few years' residence in Allegheny, he staked everything in a contest for the nomination for Congress, but was defeated by J. K. Moorhead, and thereafter his political career was erratic and his business career ended.

His last appearance in politics clearly indicated that he had ceased to be a political factor. He was nominated for collector of the port of Philadelphia by President Johnson, but was rejected by the Senate. He had outlived the great career for which his uncommon abilities so eminently fitted him, and he was unknown and unfelt in the political movements of the State of which he was once the grandest of masters.

On the 25th of October, 1872, the bruised reed was broken, and the once great administrator of Pennsylvania passed to the unknown beyond, that, like the Pontic Sea, has no returning ebb.



## XVIII.

## GOVERNOR BIGLER.

Chief Justice Gibson, Governor William Bigler of Pennsylvania, and Governor John Bigler of California, all in Office at the same time, Born in the same Immediate Community—Judge Campbell Defeated for Supreme Judge and made Attorney General, and later Postmaster General—His Appointment Strengthened the Native American Element that was Opposed to Catholics—Bigler's Early Career—Thrice Elected Senator—His Heroic Veto of Bank Bills—The Know Nothing Legislature of 1855—Battle between Cameron and Curtin—Failure to Elect a Senator—Bigler's Defeat for Governor made him United States Senator.

**W**ILLIAM BIGLER became Governor in January, 1852, when the conditions of trade and industry were greatly improved, giving him unusual opportunity to make a successful administration, and no Governor in the history of the State could have more intelligently directed the government to the best interests of the people.

He was born in the little community of Shermansburg, now Perry County, close to the home of my boyhood. It was a very primitive and sparsely settled section, but the eyes of the people always brightened when they spoke of the distinguished public men it had furnished to the country in Chief Justice John Bannister Gibson, Governor William Bigler, of Pennsylvania, and Governor John Bigler, of California, all of whom were in office at one time.

William Bigler was elected Governor of Pennsylvania in 1851, and on the same ticket with him was John Bannister Gibson, then chief justice of the State, who was continued on the elective supreme



court, and just one month before the election of Bigler and Gibson in Pennsylvania, John Bigler was elected Governor of California. John Bigler became foreign minister after serving two terms as Governor, and William Bigler became United States Senator. It was certainly a remarkable development of the greatness achieved by these bare-footed boys of Sherman's Valley.

Pennsylvania has had Governors of stronger intellectual force than Bigler, but I never knew a public man who had better command of all his faculties or could apply them to more profitable uses. He was a man of very clear conception and unusually sound judgment, with a severe conscientiousness that made him heroic in defense of the right. He was a man of unusually fine presence, of a most amiable and genial disposition, and delightful in companionship, but no influence or interest could swerve him from his convictions of duty in official trust.

He was a careful student, an intelligent observer of men and events, and thoroughly mastered every question that confronted him in the discharge of his political duties. He was not an aggressive man in the general acceptation of the term, but his conservatism never restrained him in aiding legitimate progress, and no cleaner man ever filled the executive chair of Pennsylvania.

When Bigler entered the office of Governor he had a very serious political problem to solve arising from the defeat of Judge James Campbell, of Philadelphia, who was on the State ticket with Bigler in 1851. Judge Campbell was then on the common pleas bench of the city, and justly regarded as a man of high legal attainments. He was rather a profound than a brilliant man, and his sagacity as a political leader was confessed by all the prominent men of his party.



There was factional opposition to him within the Democratic ranks, and that opposition was strengthened, if not largely created, by the fact that he was a Catholic, and the Philadelphia riots of 1844, which gave birth to the Native American party, had left religious prejudices which often outweighed political fidelity. At that time the Catholics of the State were nearly uniformly of the Democratic faith, and it was deemed not only a wise but a necessary policy to have one Catholic out of the seven candidates on the State ticket, as there were a Governor, canal commissioner and five supreme judges to be chosen. Considerable opposition was manifested to Campbell's nomination, but he was successful.

I was a member of the convention that nominated the Whig State ticket, presenting Johnston for re-election as Governor, John Strohm for canal commissioner, and Meredith, Jessup, Comley, Chambers and Coulter for the supreme court. I well remember the discussion of the best method for the Whigs to utilize in the opposition to Judge Campbell. If they nominated five Whig candidates for supreme judge, the opposition to Campbell would be scattered along the line of five, or perhaps simply strike Campbell from the ballot, and it was decided to nominate as one of the Whig candidates Justice Coulter, then on the bench, but not nominated by the Democrats. Although a Democrat in faith, he was not a partisan, but an unusually able and faithful judge, and by placing him on the Whig ticket the opposition to Campbell was concentrated on a single man, as they would naturally prefer to vote for a Democrat, and Coulter was the only man on the Whig State ticket who was elected.

The defeat of Judge Campbell threatened serious results to the Democratic party, and Bigler made



the best atonement for the wrong done to Judge Campbell within his own party household by making him attorney general, a position that Campbell filled with great credit. When Pierce was inaugurated President in 1853, the Democratic leaders of the State thought it wise to emphasize their religious tolerance by making Campbell a member of the new cabinet, and he became Pierce's Postmaster General, and discharged the duties of the office with great fidelity and ability, but his appointment to the National cabinet, and especially to the one position that controlled tens of thousands of appointments, aided very materially in the second Native American eruption that came in the shape of Know Nothingism in 1854.

Campbell lived many years after his retirement from the cabinet and was one of the most accomplished and trusted leaders and advisers of the Democratic party, but he never sought further political favors. He was a most energetic man, even when he reached the patriarchal age, and he filled such important positions in the city as a member of the Board of City Trusts and in the direction of Girard College, in all of which he gave the most assiduous devotion to public duty.

Governor Bigler's training had been well calculated to develop the very best attributes of manhood. He graduated as a printer's apprentice, and with his brother John published the Bellefonte "Democrat" for some time, but a village newspaper in what was then almost a wilderness was not sufficient to support two able-bodied men, and William finally, with the aid of friends, got together a few hundred dollars, purchased a very crude second-hand printing outfit, loaded it upon a wagon and walked most of the way with the team to Clearfield, where he established the Clearfield "Democrat."



It was a difficult undertaking, but he did all the work himself with the aid of a single apprentice, and attained for his paper the highest success that was possible within its field. He was a thorough forester, loved the woods, and soon learned to put something approaching a fair value upon the vast amount of fine lumber in that region. In a few years he became one of the largest lumber merchants of the West Branch, and I well remember the admiration he aroused among his political friends, when he was a member of the senate and a prospective candidate for Governor, by making the entire journey from Clearfield to Harrisburg on one of his own rafts. He was well equipped for the practical duties of the gubernatorial chair. He was a thoroughly good judge of men and as thoroughly familiar with every public question relating to the interests of the State.

Governor Bigler did more than any other one man in his day to save Pennsylvania from the scourge of an inflated wild-cat currency. Pennsylvania had entirely recovered from the terrible financial depression of 1841 when repudiation was narrowly escaped. Commerce, industry and trade were generally quickened, and the discovery of gold in California, although then in its infancy, seemed to be furnishing an amount of the precious metal that must diffuse wealth into every channel of business enterprise. The few millions of gold that California produced in 1851 were regarded as tenfold more important than all the twentyfold increase of gold and silver now produced in the West. The feeling was very general that a sweeping tide of prosperity was approaching, and a deluge of applications for bank charters came upon the Legislature during Bigler's first year.

The legislators were fully in sympathy with the prospective tide of wealth that was dazzling the



people, and they passed bank charters by the score, and all without any individual liability or security for depositors beyond the capital stock. In a single message Governor Bigler vetoed eleven bank charters, and during the session he sent to the senate or house thirty messages vetoing bank bills. He was thoroughly familiar with the industrial interests of the State and knew how easily the people would be tempted from the ordinary channels of industry by hope of suddenly acquired wealth, without pausing to consider that the floodtide of irresponsible banks, practically without limit as to the issue of currency, would produce a most unhealthy inflation that could end only in terrible disaster.

He was the first Governor who made an appeal to the Legislature to halt what was known as log-rolling or omnibus legislation, by which a bank charter could be made an amendment to a bill for the removal of a local schoolhouse, and insisted that he should have the right to consider every different feature of legislation upon its own merits. He proposed also in the same message two amendments, which have since been adopted in our Constitution, relating to legislation, requiring each bill to contain but a single subject, and to be passed by a majority vote of each house on a call of ayes and nays.

Bigler had served three terms in the Senate, elected each time practically without a contest, and although he peremptorily declined at the end of his second term, and sent delegates from his county in favor of another candidate, the delegates from the other counties of the district gave a unanimous vote for him and he was compelled to continue legislative service. The prominent position he occupied in the senate had thoroughly familiarized him with all matters relating to State government, and, next to Governor



Johnston, I doubt whether any man ever filled the position who was more completely equipped for shaping legislation and administering the State government. His administration commanded not only the respect, but the hearty approval of his party, and even his political opponents, however earnestly they may have differed with him, held in high esteem his ability and integrity, and when he was nominated for re-election in 1854 by the unanimous vote of the convention, given with the heartiest enthusiasm, there did not seem to be a cloud on the Democratic horizon even as large as a man's hand to threaten him with the tempest that swept him out of office by nearly 40,000 majority.

The repeal of the Missouri Compromise by a Democratic Congress aroused the anti-slavery sentiment that largely pervaded the Democratic ranks in every section of the State and brought out the first distinct murmurs of revolt, and the sudden organization of the American or "Know Nothing" party, with the Whig party practically on the verge of its death throes, found a wide field with loose aggregations of both Whigs and Democrats, and these elements were adroitly combined against Bigler in favor of James Pollock, who succeeded him.

It was a most humiliating defeat, and at the time seemed to bring hopeless destruction to his political career, but just as the defeat of Judge Campbell for supreme judge made him attorney general and Postmaster General, the defeat of Bigler for Governor made him United States Senator and one of the great national leaders of his party during the Buchanan administration.

The Know Nothing triumph of 1854 practically ended the Whig organization, as probably three-fourths of its people had become involved in the new



American party. It had made a somewhat earnest battle for General Scott for President in 1852, but it was hopeless from the start, and I do not remember any one, excepting General Scott himself, who believed it possible for him to carry Pennsylvania or to win the Presidency.

I saw him in the heat of the battle, even after Pennsylvania had voted Democratic in October by an overwhelming majority, and he did not doubt his triumphant election, and was as confident of carrying Pennsylvania as he was of the rising of the sun, but one of his junior brigadiers from civil life, who served under him in Mexico without attaining military distinction, swept the country like a hurricane, leaving Scott but four States of the Union. The Whig organization was maintained in 1853, when, for some reason that I never could fully understand, I was made the nominee of the party for auditor general. I had not been spoken of as a candidate, had no thought of it myself, but Morton McMichael headed the Philadelphia delegation and he took the liberty of presenting my name to the convention in one of his fervently eloquent speeches, and the result was that I had the honor of being in with the Whig party at its death.

The American, or Know Nothing, movement brought into the Legislature at Harrisburg the most Dolly Varden political job lot that I have ever seen in Pennsylvania. The secret Know Nothing organization surprised nearly every county in the State by electing senators and representatives whose outside friends never dreamed of their success.

My first knowledge of this unique organization was obtained in a Chambersburg municipal election. The town was largely Whig, and we went through the regular motions of nominating Whig candidates for



burgess, councilmen, etc., and sat down entirely confident that they would be elected, as the Democrats were making no opposition, but our surprise may be understood when I state the fact that when the vote was counted an entire ticket was elected not one of whom was publicly known as a candidate. Even the great Whig Gibraltar of Lancaster County was dumfounded when the election returns were footed up and it was discovered that H. M. North, a Democrat, was elected to the Legislature in a square fight.

This system of politics invited all the mean methods of mean men, and the result was that a motley crowd of shady Democrats and Republicans, including a pretty large number of local preachers, appeared in the Legislature. It was without able or responsible leadership, although there were a number of very good men who owed their election to the new political power, and the entire session was simply a series of desperate scrambles for political and personal advantage.

General Cameron had made a speech in favor of Bigler in Harrisburg the night before the election, but before the Legislature met, when he found that the Know Nothings controlled both branches of the Legislature, he turned up as a full-fledged member of the order, and became an aggressive candidate for United States Senator. Andrew G. Curtin, then secretary of the commonwealth under Pollock, was also an aggressive candidate for Senator, and was supported by many of the best old Whigs and especially by the younger element of the new political combination. Efforts were made to unite the party vote by a caucus, but it failed, and the result was the most disgraceful free-for-all fight for the senatorship that has ever been witnessed at Harrisburg.



Cameron and Curtin were the leading candidates from beginning to end, but there were a dozen or more of side-show aspirants who injected themselves into the fight at various stages, some of whom had their bank accounts very greatly depleted, and the battle grew in bitterness with each recurring day. One of the most defamatory utterances ever issued against General Cameron was prepared, signed and published over the names of a score or more very prominent members of both branches. The Legislature was not then required by the National law to meet in convention every day until the Senator was elected, but the joint convention would ballot three or four times for Senator and then adjourn to meet at a given day, probably a week later. This was continued until nearly the close of the session, when all had become disgusted with the hopeless and demoralizing conflict and the motion to adjourn without day was carried.

The Legislature thus adjourned without choosing a Senator, and the Democrats had an easy task in the fall of 1855 to elect their State ticket and both branches of the Legislature. There were many Democrats who would have been more than willing to contest senatorial honors with Governor Bigler, but they met with no encouragement. The Democratic sentiment of the State was overwhelming that the man who had been so ruthlessly crucified by Know Nothingism, as rapid in its death as it was in its birth, should have the nomination, and Governor Bigler was nominated with great enthusiasm, and he was thus given a full term in the Senate, less the few weeks intervening between the meeting of Congress on the first Monday of December and his election on the third Tuesday of January.

Bigler's career in the Senate showed that he was equal to the mastery of the gravest National problems,



and his sound judgment and conservative aims gave him great power to aid in the election of James Buchanan, his favorite candidate for the Presidency. His personal devotion to Buchanan made him resolve all doubts in favor of supporting the President in his battle with Douglas, and that led to his support of the sadly-mistaken policy of the administration in the Kansas-Nebraska disputes, although Senator Bigler always sought to temper the desperate policy of his associate leaders. He visited Kansas personally, and in perfect good faith appealed to the Free State men to come to the front, as they seemed to have the majority, but they had been overwhelmed by hordes from Missouri, and they refused to accept his advice.

Taking his career as a whole in the Senate, it was eminently creditable, and after his retirement he continued to exhibit the liveliest interest in all public affairs. He was one of the leading men in the direction of the Centennial Exposition, and labored most earnestly and unselfishly to promote its success.

Although he never made public utterance on the subject, nothing would have gratified him so much as to have been recalled to the gubernatorial chair of the State. In 1875, when the Democratic convention was in session in Erie, and had what seemed to be an almost hopeless wrestle with a number of candidates, he was hopeful and anxious that he might be accepted as a compromise between disputing factions. He was in my editorial office waiting for despatches from the Erie convention, and when I handed him the despatch announcing the nomination of Judge Pershing, he accepted it gracefully, and I doubt whether any other saw the expression of disappointment that he did not conceal from me when he felt that his last opportunity had failed.



He continued active in State affairs as well as in church, charitable and social matters in his own community, and when his life work was done no man who has ever lived in the Clearfield region was followed to his last resting place by so large and so sincere a concourse of mourners.



## XIX.

## THE KNOW NOTHING PARTY.

Repeal of the Missouri Compromise and Expiring Agonies of the Whig Party Created a Strong Know Nothing Organization Opposed to Foreigners and Catholics—The Secret Know Nothing Party Organized as “The Sons of '76, or Order of the Star Spangled Banner”—Judge Conrad Elected Mayor by the Know Nothings—His Brilliant Literary Work—His Desperate Struggle to get a Uniformed Police—Know Nothings Organize as the American Party and Nominate Fillmore for President against Fremont—The Repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

GOVERNOR BIGLER'S administration was universally acceptable to his party, and even his most earnest political opponents found little ground for criticism in the record he had made, but when he came up for re-election, two entirely new and unexpected factors confronted him, and doomed him to a most humiliating defeat on issues which had no relation whatever to the administration of State affairs. The two causes which unhorsed him in the sweeping revolution were first, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise by a Democratic Congress and President, and second, the advent of the secret American, or Know Nothing, party.

The American, or Know Nothing, organization that became such an important political power in 1854, was the culmination of various spasmodic Native American organizations beginning in New York as early as 1835, and extending to Philadelphia and Boston. The original Native American organization of New York was directed wholly against foreigners, and was provoked by the large number of foreigners



who held positions on the police force and in other city departments. It never made itself felt as a controlling political factor in New York until the spring of 1844, when it elected James Harper, one of the original firm of Harper & Brothers, publishers, as mayor of the city over both the Democratic and Whig candidates, and carried a majority in every branch of the city government.

Opposition to Catholics was not at that time an avowed article of Native American faith, but the success of the Native Americans, controlling the entire city government of New York in the spring of 1844, greatly inspired the Native Americans of Philadelphia, and an issue in an uptown section of the city over the question of reading the Bible in the public schools led to such an inflamed condition of public sentiment that the city was disgraced by what is remembered as the Native American riots of 1844, in which a number of lives were lost, and several Catholic churches and institutions burnt. This issue arose in probably the least religious section of the city, and a large majority of the Protestants who fought out the question of reading the Bible in the public schools to riot and the burning of Catholic churches, would not have known the difference between the Protestant and Catholic Bible if it had been placed in their hands, and cared little for the strictly religious issue that was involved.

It was the experience of 1844 in Philadelphia that led to the incorporation of the anti-Catholic plank into the Native American faith, and from that time until the order entirely disappeared from local or general politics, opposition to Catholicism was even a more vital issue with most of the members of the organization than opposition to foreigners. At the fall elections of 1844 the Native Americans carried New York



and Philadelphia cities with material aid from the Whigs, and they remained an important element at times in both local and State politics in Pennsylvania for a number of years.

The Native American party was an open political organization, but when its power was visibly waning in both Philadelphia and New York, a new and secret party was organized out of the remains of the old Native American known as "The Order of United Americans," but that organization did not attempt to exploit itself in general politics, although it made itself felt in local contests, and, after lingering in politics for a few years, it was supplanted by a new secret order that started in 1852.

The name of the order was "The Sons of '76, or Order of the Star Spangled Banner," but the name was not made known to the members of the organization until they were admitted to its higher degrees, and all were instructed that if asked about the organization they should answer that they knew nothing about it. This gave rise to the title of Know Nothings, by which the organization was popularly known throughout the period of its existence. It wore no badges, displayed no banners, meetings were held in the utmost privacy and called by a signal understood only by the initiated. Each lodge had its delegates who constituted a council with power to nominate all candidates, and every member was sworn to support the candidates thus nominated under penalty of expulsion if they failed to do so.

This organization would probably never have been known beyond an occasional assertion of power in local contests in our cities, but for the general demoralization of the Democratic party caused by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and the general disintegration of the Whig party that was then in its



dying agonies. The appointment of Judge Campbell, a prominent Catholic, to the National cabinet in 1853, intensified the anti-Catholic sentiment, and added largely to the numbers of the new secret party, and this new political party, with the Whig party in the throes of dissolution and the Democratic party split wide open on the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, had a most fruitful field in which to harvest an immense increase of its forces.

The first startling exhibition of the power of the Know Nothing party was given in the first municipal election held in Philadelphia after the consolidation in 1854. Until that time Philadelphia city extended only from the Delaware to the Schuylkill and from Vine to South streets, with a goodly number of petty municipalities embraced in what was known as Philadelphia County. The contest for consolidation had disturbed political parties for some years, but in the fall of 1853 the substantial business men of the city decided that they could not longer trust the regular political organizations to accomplish consolidation, and they nominated an independent ticket for senators and representatives and elected it, defeating the Whig candidates in the city, and sending Eli K. Price to the senate over Charles O'Neill, then a senator, and for many years a Congressman, and the representatives chosen were among the leading business men of both parties. Consolidation was thus effected as all parties were afraid to oppose it, and the municipal elections were fixed for May to separate them entirely from the political influences of State contests.

The Whigs nominated Robert T. Conrad for mayor, and the Democrats nominated Richard Vaux, who was then regarded as one of the strongest of the Democratic leaders. He had been a candidate for mayor in 1846, but was beaten by Mayor Swift. He was a



man of great ability, tireless energy, and devoted much of his life to very active participation in the management of our penal and charitable institutions. Although defeated by Conrad, he was elected over Henry D. Moore as the successor of Conrad in 1856, but he was not successful as an executive officer, and altogether too high-toned for practical Democratic politics. The result was that he suffered a humiliating defeat two years later, when Alexander Henry became mayor of the city. Vaux was for many years one of the unique characters of Philadelphia, universally respected and generally beloved, and when Samuel J. Randall, then father of the House, died in the harness, Vaux was given a practically unanimous election as his successor, but was defeated for re-election by Mr. McAleer.

Judge Conrad, like Richard Vaux, possessed very few of the qualities necessary for the successful performance of administrative duties. He was one of the most brilliant of the then somewhat noted Philadelphia circle of literary men. He was a ready, ornate and caustic writer, and his editorial contributions to the "North American" attracted very wide attention, but the only two positions to which he was ever called happened to be public trusts for which his peculiar attainments, eminent as they were, were not adapted. He was one of the three judges of the criminal court, created by the Legislature for Philadelphia, but he was entirely too poetic for dry judicial duties, and the court soon came into such disfavor that it was abolished. He made a very earnest struggle to accomplish good results for the city and make his administration successful, but he was impatient, tactless and failed to command the hearty support of the people.

It may surprise some of the readers of the present



day to know that one of the measures originating with him that greatly weakened his administration by the very general criticism it provoked, was his attempt to uniform the police, so that they might be distinguished and exercise a moral influence by their presence wherever they appeared, but the police rebelled against it, declaring a uniform to be a badge of servitude, and the public, then entirely unused to any uniforms outside of military companies, regarded the innovation as one of Judge Conrad's poetic ideas, and the result was a very disheartening failure. But Judge Conrad persisted so earnestly in the effort to have his police distinguished from others that he finally required the police to wear a particular style of hat that would distinguish them from others, wherever they might appear, and, although he succeeded in carrying the measure through, it was violently assailed as a job for the benefit of some favorite hatters, and the police were looked upon with contempt by a very large portion of the community. He blazed the way, however, and in the fullness of time the people got to understand that policemen should be in uniform, and that the uniform would be a badge of honor. His administration weakened rather than strengthened his party, and gave Mr. Vaux an easy victory for the succession.

Conrad was nominated by the Whigs solely because it was known that he was in favor with the Native American element of the city, and it was the new secret organization of the Know Nothings that gave him a victory over Vaux nearly half as large as Vaux's entire vote. The result was appalling to the Democratic politicians of the city and State, and somewhat disturbing even to the Whigs, as they saw that a new political power confronted them with sufficient votes to decide any contest between the two great parties.



These apprehensions were fully justified at the succeeding fall election when one man on the Whig State ticket was elected by nearly 40,000, and another on the same ticket was defeated by nearly 200,000. Judge Conrad was one of the most eloquent and impressive of our Pennsylvania orators. He was very scholarly, earnest and imposing in manner, and unusually forceful in his exquisite rhetoric. He should have attained much greater distinction than came to him, as he was a man of rare and unusually versatile literary qualities. I never missed an opportunity to hear him, whether on the political or temperance rostrum, and he was one of the most genial and delightful of companions. He was always intensely interested in politics, and Philadelphia would have honored herself if her people had clothed him with congressional honors, and continued him there for life.

The Know Nothing organization was well described by Chief Justice Black, who had been elected to the supreme bench in 1854 when Bigler, the Democratic candidate for Governor, was defeated. I chanced to be in Pittsburg, where the court was in session, soon after the October election of 1854, and had a pleasant chat with Judge Black on the election. He was startled at the exhibition of the power of the Know Nothings and appalled at the wrecks they had wrought on both sides of the old party lines, but I well remember his prophesy:—

“They’re like the bee, biggest when it’s born; it will perish as quickly as it rose to power.”

It is remarkable that an organization so strong never was felt as a controlling factor after its wonderful exhibition of power in 1854. It rapidly declined in strength, as its secret methods gave despotic power to the councils or managers, which positions had been generally successfully sought by unworthy and unscrup-





*Robert T. Conrad*



ulous men. It practically absorbed the Whig party, leaving it little more than the running-gears of an organization, and, after struggling along for a few years, it and the remnant of the Whig organization were absorbed in the Republican party, whose timely birth gave refuge to the hopeless old organization.

It exhibited some strength in 1856 when it nominated Fillmore and Donaldson for President and Vice-President. Fillmore's high character gave credit to the movement, and the conservative Whig and anti-slavery elements which were generally disgusted with the sudden advent of Fremont as a Presidential candidate, were glad to take refuge under its banner. The old Whig element of the South was strongly averse to affiliation with the Democracy, and readily accepted Fillmore, and the opposition to Buchanan voted almost solidly for Fillmore in the Southern States, while in the Northern States it was more or less divided. Fillmore carried the electoral vote of Maryland, where the Fremont ticket received only 81 votes, and Fillmore had 8,345 majority over Buchanan. That is the only electoral vote that ever was won by the Know Nothing party, and a majority of those who voted for Fillmore in Maryland were not members of or in sympathy with the organization.

After 1856 the Know Nothing party practically disappeared as a general political factor, although some efforts were made as late as 1860 to galvanize the remains into a semblance of life. Its achievements were confined to a single year, that of 1854, when it controlled Pennsylvania, and in Massachusetts elected not only a Governor on a straight Know Nothing ticket over both the Whig and the Democratic candidates, but elected every Congressman in the State. But its decline was as rapid as its growth, and the only year that marked its triumph dated its decline and fall.



Unlike most parties which have been created and perished, the Know Nothing organization died generally unlamented save by the few unscrupulous political leaders who could profit only by its peculiar and arbitrary methods, and it left no approving impression in the public mind, and no monuments of beneficent achievement to tell that it had ever lived.

The other disturbing political element of 1854 was the repeal of the Missouri Compromise by a Democratic Senate, House and President. In the history of a free government such as ours there must be many political blunders committed in the heat of great party struggles or to promote individual ambition, but the repeal of the Missouri Compromise stands out single and alone as the most monstrous and fatal of all political errors committed by the party in power. The question of slavery extension had become a very vital one. The North was developing and extending westward with great rapidity, giving the positive assurance of new free States at an early day, while the South had nothing in prospect to maintain what it called the "equilibrium" between the two sections. In addition to this necessity of political power, the old slave States were largely interested in slave markets, as their exhausted lands made slave growing more profitable than cultivation of plantations.

It was deliberately decided that the battle should be made to control the population of the two new Territories of Kansas and Nebraska by Southern votes from Missouri and give them slave Constitutions, but the Missouri Compromise stood in the way, and Douglas, the ablest of the Democratic disputants of that day, took the lead in repealing the Compromise, and substituted what he mistakenly called popular sovereignty. After a long struggle the bill was passed in the House by 113 to 100 and in the Senate by



35 to 13. Many of the Northern Democrats voted against it, including Curtis, Drum, Gamble, Grow and Trout, from Pennsylvania. The Southern States gave nine votes against it, including four Whigs from Tennessee and the venerable Thomas H. Benton, of Missouri.

On the night of the final passage of the bill in the Senate William H. Seward made one of the most impressive speeches of his life. It was known that he would make the closing argument on behalf of the minority, and when he arose near the midnight hour there was the stillness of death throughout the Senate and the crowded gallery. In his opening he said:—

The sun has set for the last time upon the guaranteed and certain liberties of all the unsettled and unorganized portions of the American Continent that lie within the jurisdiction of the United States. To-morrow's sun will rise in dim eclipse over them. How long that obscuration shall last is known only to the Power that directs and controls all human beings.

The repeal of the Missouri Compromise not only dated the decline and fall of the Democratic party, but it sowed the dragon's teeth that made the avoidance of civil war impossible in '61. True, Buchanan was elected President in 1856 by divided opposition, but for more than a quarter of a century thereafter no Democrat reached the Presidential chair.



## XX.

## GOVERNOR POLLOCK.

The Fantastic Election of 1854—Majorities on State Ticket Varying from 37,007 Whig to 190,748 Democratic—Pollock's Career in Congress—His Earnest Aid to Professor Morse—Curtin Chairman of the Whig State Committee—His Peculiar Deals with the Know Nothing Leaders—Severe Conditions Exacted—William B. Reed—His Controversy with Curtin—The Sad End of One of the Most Brilliant Members of the Philadelphia Bar.

THE political contest of 1854 presented the most unique and conspicuous results to be found in the entire history of Pennsylvania politics. It was the last battle made by the Whig party as a recognized factor in politics, and while the Whig organization was thus in its dying throes, the Democratic party was greatly disintegrated and sowed the seeds which made it practically a minority party for more than a generation. True, it elected Buchanan in 1856, who was largely a minority President, but for nearly a quarter of a century thereafter the party was defeated in every National contest. Had the contest for Governor in 1854 been fought out squarely between the two parties without the intervention of the Know Nothing organization, there is little doubt that the Whig ticket would have been elected, because of the Democratic revolt against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, but the Know Nothing organization, with all its severely secret appliances, gradually absorbed quite two-thirds of the Whigs of the State, and a very large proportion of the Democrats. In order that the unique situation of that period may be understood, I give the official vote for the three State offices then filled:



## GOVERNOR.

|                                |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| James Pollock, Whig .....      | 204,008 |
| William Bigler, Democrat ..... | 167,001 |
| Pollock's majority.....        | 37,007  |

## CANAL COMMISSIONER.

|                               |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| George Darsie, Whig .....     | 83,331  |
| Henry S. Mott, Democrat ..... | 274,074 |

|                       |         |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Mott's majority ..... | 190,743 |
|-----------------------|---------|

## SUPREME JUDGE.

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Daniel M. Smyser, Whig .....                  | 78,571  |
| Jeremiah S. Black, Democrat .....             | 167,010 |
| Thomas Baird, Know Nothing .....              | 121,576 |
| Black's plurality .....                       | 45,434  |
| Majority of combined opposition over Black .. | 33,137  |

The Whigs and Democrats held their regular State conventions early in the year, as was common in those days, and Governor Bigler was renominated, not only with entire unanimity, but with the heartiest enthusiasm exhibited by his supporters. There was then no sign of Democratic disintegration or of the advent of the new political factor that turned everything topsy turvy in the politics of the State. I was a delegate in the Whig convention, and heartily supported the nomination of Pollock. He was the logical candidate of the Whigs, and his nomination was effected without a serious contest. Curtin's name was presented to the convention, not with any hope of winning the nomination for him, but he was the favorite of a large element of the young Whigs of the interior of the State, and they simply put him in training for the great battles which he fought later in life.

Pollock had exhibited unusual personal and political strength in carrying at three consecutive elections his Democratic congressional district that had been



specially fashioned by Governor Porter to give congressional honors to his old friend, John Snyder. He was first chosen to fill a vacancy occasioned by the death of Congressman Frick, who had defeated Snyder in 1843 and died soon thereafter, and in the desperate contest of 1844 Pollock won out by a small majority, to which he added a sweeping victory in 1846, when the Democrats were snowed under by a repeal of the tariff of 1842. He was one of the younger members of the House when he entered Congress, but during his nearly six sessions of service he had exhibited not only great efficiency as a National legislator, but he was in advance of most of his older associates in heartily sustaining all progressive movements.

He was one of the few men who took kindly to Professor Morse when he came to Washington and was shunned by nearly all government officials as a luny crank because he proposed to utilize the lightning for the transmission of messages, and Pollock was also one of the earliest of our public men to accept Benton's idea of the great destiny of the West after the extension of our territory to the Pacific by Mexican annexation. He was a man of fine address, delightful manners and a popular orator of unusual attainments. He was not a man of more forceful intellect than Bigler, but quite as logical and rather more fervent and ornate in public discussion. Thus the two candidates for Governor were both men who had been tried in the public service, both of unblemished reputation, and both prepared to bring high qualities of statesmanship and ripe experience to the service of the State.

Pollock indicated Curtin as the man to take charge of his campaign, and Curtin was made chairman of the Whig State committee. He entered upon his new duties with all the ardor that was always exhibited in his public efforts, and everything seemed to be going



along very smoothly for a month or two until he was finally confronted with the startling information that there was a secret organization in the State that embraced a clear majority of the Whig voters and many of the Democratic voters, and the election of Mayor Conrad in Philadelphia in May was pointed to in confirmation of the statement. I happened to be in a position to know the inner movements of that contest, and while there have been some political struggles in Pennsylvania which were regarded as exceptionally peculiar in their developments and results, I confess that I never saw political highjinks played to the limit as it was by the Know Nothings in 1854.

Three men, all of whom are dead, and none of whom are remembered as a factor in Pennsylvania politics, had managed to get possession of the machinery of the Know Nothing organization. They were men of low cunning and had availed themselves of the peculiar facilities offered by the new secret organization to make leadership autocratic in authority. There were no public assemblies where the movements of the party could be discussed, and those who controlled the State councils of the organization had it in their power to declare any decision that best suited their purpose, and they started out to make the most of their opportunity. I was present with Curtin when the proposition was made by those three men, who showed beyond doubt that they held the control of the Know Nothing nominations absolutely in their own hands, as the local Know Nothing lodges voted in secret, neither one knowing what another did, while the returns were sent to the State Council to be computed and declared. They did not approach the subject with any degree of delicacy, but were brutally frank alike in their demand and in declaring their



purpose to defeat the Whig candidate for Governor if their wishes were not acceded to. Each of the three men required a pledge from Curtin that three of the most lucrative offices in the gift of the Governor, being the inspectorships of Philadelphia, should be given to them.

They did not conceal the fact that it made no difference how the Know Nothing lodges voted, they would declare the nomination in favor of or against Pollock, depending upon Curtin's agreement to their proposition. He could have rejected the traders and exposed their infamy, but it would probably have cost the success of his candidate. Curtin deliberated long and had several conferences with them before he gave his answer, and he finally acceded to their demands to the extent of agreeing that he would recommend the appointments they demanded, but that he would not give an unqualified pledge as to the action of the Governor, who was then not a member of the Know Nothing organization, and I do not know that he ever did formally associate himself with it.

Curtin was safe in taking the position that he did, for the reason that the same men could not have approached the Democratic organization with a like proposition, as Bigler certainly would never have appointed any of them, even if they had elected him, as they had no position in the Democratic party. With visible reluctance they finally accepted Curtin's pledge, of which Pollock had no knowledge, and it was understood he was not to be advised of it during the contest.

The entire programme was then arranged that the State Council should announce as the nominees of the Know Nothing party: Pollock, Whig, for Governor; Mott, Democrat, for canal commissioner, and that



they should nominate one of their own order as the third candidate for supreme judge. Mott was a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat from the Tenth Legion, and would have lost a leg in preference to becoming a member of the Know Nothing party, but without his knowledge he was declared the candidate, and did not even know he was the Know Nothing candidate until the returns gave him the largest majority that had ever been cast for any man in Pennsylvania. As soon as the election was over and he saw that he had been given this large majority by the Know Nothing vote, he openly denounced the organization as deliberately guilty of a fraud in making him its candidate, and from that time until his dying day he was probably the most vindictive opponent of Know Nothingism the State could furnish.

The alleged nomination of Pollock and Mott by the Know Nothing organization was a deliberate fraud upon the Know Nothing people, as was evidenced by the fact that their names were submitted to the various lodges by the State Council as candidates and as members of the order, when, in fact, neither of them was in political fellowship with the organization, but it mattered little whether the lodges voted for Pollock and Mott or voted against them, as there was no power to revise the returns, and when they were declared the candidates of the party, then new in political experience and enthusiastic with expected victory, the ticket was accepted without a question and the election of Pollock and Mott was absolutely assured.

It is marvelous indeed how little was known of the Know Nothing organization during the campaign of 1854. Even Curtin, who was in close contact with the trading leaders, had no conception of its strength and never dreamed of the political revolu-



tion that it was about to work out. For some time before the election it was generally expected that Pollock would be successful, as the Democratic ranks were very much broken by the repeal of the Missouri compromise, against which nearly or quite one-half the Democratic members from the State had voted. The leaders of both parties, who were usually well informed as to the conditions of the battle, simply measured the probable result by the revulsion against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise that aroused an intense hostility and broke away from the Democratic party the entire Wilmot wing and swept the solid Democratic counties of the North into revolution.

When the returns came in they dumfounded all political calculations. They found one man on the Whig ticket chosen by nearly forty thousand majority, and one man on the Democratic ticket chosen by nearly five times forty thousand majority, while one Democrat on the State ticket had been saved because he was fortunate enough to strike a triangular contest in which the Whigs and Know Nothings voted for their separate candidates.

Darsie was one of the ablest of the Whig leaders of the West, and one of the most respected, but he was unfortunate in having been born abroad, although his parents emigrated here when he was in his infancy, but that made him an impossible candidate for the Know Nothings. Bigler was astounded by the unexpected blow and felt that his public career was ended, as the unity of the Democratic organization seemed hopelessly broken. I saw him soon after his defeat, and found him eminently philosophical and so entirely disgusted with politics that he anticipated a pleasurable retirement to private life in the enjoyment of his home and people, to whom he was singularly devoted; but that defeat, with a cloud hanging over



him that seemed to be almost without a silver lining, made him United States Senator practically without a contest only one year later, and gave him a position of distinction and influence in the party that he never otherwise would have attained.

It was the contest of 1854 that practically severed William B. Reed's fellowship with the Whig party. He was then district attorney of Philadelphia and the most accomplished prosecutor that ever entered a court of justice. I had met him the year before, when I was the Whig candidate for auditor general, and had several political conferences with him relating to the contest in Philadelphia. He was on the local ticket himself the same year for re-election as district attorney, and the first assurance he gave me was that his battle was practically settled, and that he was ready to give his best efforts in support of the State ticket.

I can recall few men who impressed me as did William B. Reed when I first met him. He was an unusually handsome man, with a face that clearly indicated the masterly ability he possessed, and one of the most graceful of gentlemen under all conditions. He was ambitious to be attorney general under Pollock, and failing in that he committed the error of permitting his resentments to master him, and he addressed a very angry and caustic public letter to Curtin soon after the new administration got under way, resigning his position on the Whig State committee, of which Curtin was chairman. He discovered that there had been some peculiar political diplomacy between Curtin and the Know Nothing organization, and as Reed was himself a master in that sort of political management, and had always handled the Native Americans in Philadelphia most successfully to serve himself, he felt that he had been slighted and that,



with his disappointment at not entering the cabinet, made him publicly break with the organization, believing that he was omnipotent in Philadelphia and could compel the Whig party to restore relations with him on his own terms.

I know of no sadder wreck in our public men than that of William B. Reed. The organization of the Republican party and the nomination of Fremont in 1856 opened the way for him to support Buchanan for President, but misfortunes and disappointments multiplied upon him until he finally became the most violent opponent of the North in our Civil War. He had been a leader of leaders; he could not bow to the mastery of others, and his impetuous temperament led him into the most ostentatious and violent hostility to the government until no man could trust him with a case in court, with all his ability at the bar, and social recognition of old-time friends was denied him. He had lived in luxury which was amply provided for by his large professional earnings, and poverty involved him in pecuniary complications from which he never recovered. He died in New York ten years after the war, where he lived for several years earning a few dollars as an editorial contributor to the New York "World."

It was not difficult to detect his articles, as bitterness seemed to grow upon him as long as he wielded his pen. In one article he personally criticised me most unjustly when I was editor of the "Times," to which I answered in a very brief paragraph, simply giving the statements and the source from which they came. Soon thereafter I received a letter from his daughter appealing to me not to further criticise her father, as he was then on his dying bed, and in a few days his life, so resplendent in achievements, so deeply shadowed in misfortune and sorrow, was ended.



Pollock's election, of course, brought out the usual multitude of applicants for the important places, and the three Know Nothing traders decided that they would accept the positions of flour inspector, leather inspector and bark inspector. Curtin was the only man named for secretary of the commonwealth, as he was considered fairly entitled to it, and the Know Nothing applicants assumed that they would have an easy victory in gaining their lucrative positions. Curtin literally fulfilled his pledge, saying to the Governor that he had given his promise to urge these appointments, but had not pledged the Governor to accept them. He also frankly told the Governor all that had transpired, and left the Governor to solve the problem in his own way.

The Governor's first decision was to appoint none of them, but he afterwards reconsidered that and gave one of them a minor inspectorship of the city, not nearly so profitable as any of the three they had presumably contracted for. The disappointed Know Nothing leaders had to accept their defeat, as they had no way of visiting vengeance upon any one, and, as their party went practically to pieces within a year, their names were never even locally prominent in the politics of the State. One of them became an active Republican and finally reached legislative honors, but the others were never again known or felt in the local contests of their own communities.



## XXI.

## SALE OF THE MAIN LINE—ERIE RIOTS.

Governor Pollock Progressive in Railroad Advancement—His Early Support of the Pacific Railway—Sale of the Main Line of Canal and Railway to the Pennsylvania Railroad—Supreme Court sets aside Tax Provision Levying Tonnage Taxes to be Paid—The Suspension of 1857—Struggle in the Legislature to Legalize Suspension of Banks—The Erie Railroad Riots—The Prominent Men Involved in the Struggle—Peace Finally Attained by a Stakeless Game of Cards.

GOVERNOR POLLOCK had been one of the most progressive members of Congress, and much was expected of him as Governor of Pennsylvania. He was inaugurated with the most imposing ceremonies I have ever witnessed on a like occasion at Harrisburg, and his inaugural address had the ring of true metal. He was the first man who obtained formal action in Congress in favor of the construction of the Pacific Railway. On the 23d of June, 1848, he offered a resolution in the House calling for the appointment of a special committee to inquire into the necessity and practicability of constructing such a highway, and as chairman of the committee he made an elaborate report. That was the first official act of any branch of the government in favor of what was then regarded as an impossible enterprise. He appreciated the fact that he was in advance of his time, as the first sentence of his report made to Congress was in these words: "The proposition at first view is startling," but he demonstrated the practicability of the enterprise in a manner that in a few years became prophetic.

Many of his immediate constituents regarded him as



strangely deluded on the subject of the Pacific Railway, and in the winter of 1848 he delivered an address on the subject at Lewisburg in which he said:

At the risk of being considered insane, I will venture the prediction that in less than twenty-five years from this evening a railroad will be completed and in operation between New York and San Francisco, Cal.; that a line of steamships will be established between San Francisco, Japan and China, and there are now in my audience ladies who will, before the expiration of the period named, drink tea brought from China and Japan by this route to their own doors.

Highly as he was respected, his prediction was received with general incredulity, but on the 10th of May, 1869, just twenty-one years after he had made this remarkable prophesy, the last rail was laid and the last spike driven in a continuous railway line from the Father of Waters to the Western Sea.

Governor Pollock was seriously handicapped at the beginning of his administration by the utter demoralization of his first Legislature, remembered as the one Know Nothing Legislature of the State, and one that made the session of 1855 a blot on the annals of the Commonwealth. It was not only demoralized by a free-for-all race for the United States Senatorship that dragged in the strangest combination of candidates ever known in such a struggle, but the only legislation of importance that came from it was what was known as the "jug law" that was severely restrictive upon those who held liquor licenses, and a bill for the sale of the Main Line of the public works, that had such harsh conditions as to make it impossible for any one to bid at the proposed sale. The Governor very strongly urged the sale of the public works, as they had become a running sore of corruption, including political debauchery and the systematic plunder of the treasury.



Two years later, when a more reasonable Legislature was assembled, the second act was passed and approved for the sale of the Main Line, and the Pennsylvania Railroad became the purchaser. The act of '55 proposing the sale of the Main Line was so severe in its restrictions as to absolutely prohibit the sale, and the act of '57 erred in the opposite direction by making the terms entirely too liberal. The tonnage tax imposed upon the traffic of the Pennsylvania Railroad was absolutely prohibitory on through freight, as the Pennsylvania Railroad had rivals north and south extending to the Western markets, entirely free from such taxation, and it could not possibly compete with them. Philadelphia was thus deprived of a fair share of the commerce of the West. The act of '57, authorizing the sale of the Main Line, was framed with the knowledge that the Pennsylvania Railroad Company could be the only purchaser, and it made the unfortunate provision in a single section that the company should be released from the tonnage tax and from State taxation upon all its property other than stocks and securities.

This provision seemed reasonable enough at that time, as the company had very little real estate for taxation, but, viewing its great possessions at the present time, there would be a very general protest against such a vast amount of property being free from taxation, and it would inflame popular prejudice to an extent that could not fail to force the violation of the contract. The supreme court held that the act providing for the sale was constitutional in all but the single section relating to taxation, and that gave the Main Line to the Pennsylvania Railroad Company with the tonnage tax unrepealed. The faith of the State had been practically pledged for the repeal of that tax, but it was not until four years had elapsed that the





James Thompson



Legislature repealed it, although earnest efforts were made from year to year as a new Legislature met.

The Pennsylvania Railroad Company took possession of the Main Line on the 1st of August, 1857, and in his annual message Governor Pollock congratulated the people of the State upon the consummation of the sale. He said: "The many approve; the few complain, those most who have gained an unenviable reputation by reckless disregard of the public interests as exhibited in the extravagant, useless and fraudulent expenditure of the public money for selfish or partisan purposes."

The sale embraced only the Main Line, including the canals and railroads owned by the State between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, but one year later the Legislature of 1858 sold all the remaining State canals to the Philadelphia & Erie Railroad, and I felt great pride in being able, as a member of the house, to propose and pass unanimously an act of five lines abolishing the canal board that had been a fountain of debauchery and profligacy for many years. Governor Pollock exerted a powerful if not a controlling influence in accomplishing the sale of the Main Line, that became the first development of the progressive policy that has made the Pennsylvania Railroad Company the greatest railway system of the world.

In the fall of 1857 the Bank of Pennsylvania, then the leading bank of the State, closed its doors, and a general panic and suspension of all the banks of the State speedily followed. It was not over three weeks until the general October election when a new Legislature would be chosen, and it became a very serious question when the term of a Legislature expired, as the Constitution of 1838 did not definitely fix the limitations to the terms of senators and representatives. To avoid the complication Governor Pollock summoned the Legislature on very short notice, and



sent a message urging the enactment of a law legalizing the suspension of the banks for a definite period. There were roosters in the Legislature of those days, although not as numerous as they have been in later times, and between Democratic hostility to banks generally, and the corrupt element of the Legislature, the passage of the measure was delayed until all became apprehensive that the remedial measure would not be enacted before the election of a new Legislature, and all appreciated the possibility of a remedial act passed by the old Legislature after the election of a new one being declared null and void.

The banks were represented by a powerful lobby, as they were liable to forfeiture of charter at any time, and finally the condition became well understood that the relief measure desired by the banks could be passed promptly by a purchase of the gang of roosters that held the balance of power. Bankers were inexperienced in dealing with Legislature corruptionists, and they were appalled at the proposition to secure the relief by the purchase of a gang of boodlers. In the emergency they sent for one of the oldest and most influential of the bank presidents of Philadelphia. He was a man of the world and eminently practical. He went to Harrisburg, and when the question was submitted to him his answer was: "What's the use of praying when you're in hell; pay the d—d scoundrels and let's go home." His advice was taken and the banks of Pennsylvania were relieved from the penalty of suspension.

One of the most interesting and irritating episodes that became interwoven with Pollock's administration was what was then known as the Erie riots. The Erie and Northeastern Railroad Company had built a short line to connect with the New York Central at Buffalo and with the Lake Shore line at Erie, by which a con-



tinuous railway line was made to the West. They did not have uniform gauge at that time, and the gauge west of Erie was different from the gauge east, and it required all passengers and traffic to be transferred at Erie. The necessities of commerce required that it should be relieved from the delay and cost of being handled, and of passengers changing cars, simply because there was a difference of an inch or two in the gauge of the two lines, and the railways changed their gauge so that passenger and freight trains passed east and west through Erie without reshipment of their tonnage and passengers. This aroused the hostility of the people of the city of Erie, whose sympathies the railway company seemed to have generally alienated, and the battle progressed little by little until the entire community became involved in one of the most disgraceful local conflicts in the history of the State.

The people divided pretty evenly on the side of through commerce, or in favor of maintaining the break of gauge, and the two contending forces were popularly known as "Rippers" and "Shanghais." The term "Ripper" was applied to the friend of the break of gauge, as they had repeatedly ripped up the tracks of the road, and later on when the contest had reached white heat, the women of the town turned out in a body and burned a railroad bridge. This contest continued for several years, and so completely inflamed the entire community that the prominent citizens were divided on the issue, and ceased all social intercourse and would not even worship at the same church. Erie was an important county, and although reliably Whig under all ordinary conditions, disregarded all political ties and elected a divided ticket to the Legislature on the distinct issue of repealing the charter of the Erie and Northeast Road. After a long and irritating conflict, the bill transferring the custody of the road to



the State was passed and approved by the Governor. The charter powers of the company were assumed by the Commonwealth, and of course the road had to be operated by the State authorities. Governor Pollock appointed ex-Congressman Casey as state superintendent to operate the road, and after struggling for a few months in vain efforts to harmonize the people and to maintain an open line of communication between the East and West, he resigned in disgust. The Governor then appointed the late General William F. Small, of Philadelphia, an experienced soldier in the Mexican War, and who had served in the senate, hoping that he would be able to calm down the belligerents and operate the line, but after devoting some weeks to his work he declared it to be hopeless and sent a peremptory resignation to the Executive.

The Governor sent for me, stated the situation and urged me to accept the place. It was certainly a most uninviting task, but he was so importunate that I finally agreed to accept, only on the condition that he would give me full authority to summon the necessary military power of the State to protect the line when in my judgment it was necessary. He said that he did not see any other way to maintain the peace there, and he would be willing that I should summon the military whenever, after careful consideration, I regarded it as a necessity to operate the line. I went to Erie at once and fortunately I had rather intimate personal acquaintance with most of the leaders of the dispute, all of whom were men of high character and intelligence.

On the anti-railroad side were such men as Judge Thompson, afterwards chief justice of the State; Senator Skinner, then serving in the senate; Mr. Lowrey, who afterwards became senator for two or more terms, and a large number of men prominent in



the business circles of the city. On the other side were men of equal distinction and character, such as John H. Walker, who had been senator and was president of our last constitutional convention; Senator Johnson, who had served in the senate, and published one of the leading papers of the city; Mr. Courtright, one of the chief investors in the railroad company, and many others, all prominent in professional and business circles.

I was most hospitably entertained every night during my stay there, and I was careful to divide my acceptances equally between the disputing forces, but I never met one of the opposing parties at any of the entertainments given. The city was in dilapidation. Its population had been reduced to about 5,000, business was at a standstill, and the only question that was discussed in parlors, business houses, or on the street corner was the railroad issue. I earnestly tried to summon the leading disputants into conference, but it was utterly impossible. Some of the railroad people would have come, but the others would not even entertain the suggestion. After a week or more of daily conference with the leading men, I worked out a method by which I hoped I could reconcile them at least to the extent of permitting the road to be operated without interference. I made concessions to both sides in manning the line, and presented it to the leading disputants, all of whom agreed to it. I made the changes at once, and was assured by the prominent men of both sides that there would be no further trouble.

It was in midsummer, and I started east by way of West Point, where I concluded to rest for a few days, but within forty-eight hours I received a dispatch from Erie stating that the riot had broken out afresh, that Senator Johnson's printing office had been gutted



and his press and printing material burned in a bonfire on the street. I hastened back to Erie, and at once called upon the leading anti-railroad men. They said, what perhaps was not true, that it was not done with their knowledge or their approval, but that they found it impossible to restrain the people. I had done everything that it was possible to do in the way of compromise, and I then went to Mr. Courtright, who was a thoroughly experienced railroad man, and who was so anxious to save his railway property that he was entirely willing to advise the most generous adjustment. I went over the whole ground with him very fully, and finally determined upon a just policy to be adopted. I prepared it carefully and presented it to Judge Thompson, Senator Skinner and others of the opponents of the railroad who were entirely reasonable and wanted an honest adjustment of the dispute, but confessed that they could not control the mob element that had been infuriated by the long-continued irritation.

I then announced to them that all efforts to harmonize the difficulty with the co-operation of the opponents of the railroad had failed, and that I now would adopt a policy that would coerce the acceptance of law and order. I gave them a programme for operating the road, and notified them that on the following day it would go into effect, and that I would operate the line if it required a soldier upon every cross-tie to protect it, and that soldiers called to protect the road would be instructed to fire on anyone attempting to destroy it, whether the offender wore trousers or petticoats. I had the authority of the Governor to summon the military, and had an ample military force ready to be brought to Erie in a few hours.

Of course I was very much distressed at the situation, because I feared that the spirit of lawlessness was so



rife that the more intelligent portion of the anti-railroad men could not prevent them from precipitating a disturbance that must necessarily result in the sacrifice of life. After careful reflection I decided to make the desperate experiment of inviting two of the leading railroad men and two of the leading anti-railroad men to meet at my room at the same hour, without either knowing that the others were invited, and I sent a letter to ex-Senator John H. Walker and Milton C. Courtright, leading railroad men, and to Judge Thompson and Senator Skinner, the most prominent anti-railroad men, asking them to be at my room at seven o'clock that evening. There had been no social, business or personal intercourse between Thompson and Skinner on the one side, and Walker and Courtright on the other side for a year or more, and it was an even guess that when I got them together they would simply explode and separate, or probably worse than that, but I thought there was a chance for peace, and I ventured to try it. They all enjoyed a drink of whisky and a game of euchre, and I had my room bountifully supplied to meet the emergency.

The first to appear was Judge Thompson, who was a most delightful gentleman, and whom I did not fear as likely to provoke a disturbance, but who would be probably ready for a battle on any visible provocation. While we were standing at the sideboard taking the first sample of the whisky, there was a knock at the door and John H. Walker entered. He was a fighter of fighters, and the one I most feared. He stopped inside the door, evidently startled at seeing Judge Thompson, and I immediately walked up to him, shook him by the hand, and told him that I had invited him to meet Judge Thompson, as two of the most respected citizens of the city, as my guests for the evening, and



asked him to join us in a glass. He hesitated for some moments, and I very much feared that he would respond explosively, but he finally joined me and walked up to Judge Thompson and reached out his hand, and all took a glass together. I felt then that the battle was won, for with John H. Walker, the most implacable of all the belligerents, on terms with Judge Thompson I had nothing to apprehend from Skinner, who was amiable, and from Courtright, who had great interests at stake. They came in a few minutes later, and seeing Thompson and Walker in social intercourse logically fell in, and we at once sat down to a stakeless game of euchre. I had a fine supper for the party about midnight, and the game of cards continued until the sun was purpling the east, with the promise of another day, when they all shook hands in the most friendly way and went to their homes. That settled the Erie riots.

I never had occasion to return to Erie to suppress disturbance, and the railroad was operated from that time on without interruption. Certain concessions were promptly made by the railroad company extending a branch to the Lake Shore, and as the passions of the occasion faded out, all were glad to relegate the disgraceful Erie riots to forgetfulness. After two years of riotous discord, breaking up the peace of social circles and churches and dethroning law and order in the community, and after defying diplomacy and even military authority, and carrying the riotous proceedings to the extent of women tearing up tracks and destroying bridges, the whole war was settled in one night by a game of cards, several bottles of old rye, and the best supper that Brown's Hotel could furnish. I never had occasion to return to Erie to superintend the road, and the succeeding Legislature restored the chartered rights of the company, and I returned to them the



liberal profits which stood to my credit in the treasury of the State.

In my official report to the Governor, after I was relieved from the charge of the railroad, by the re-establishment of peace in the Erie community, I did not state the precise method by which peace had been obtained, but I had personally informed the Governor of it; and while he was much delighted at the restoration of peace, he left me greatly in doubt as to whether he would not have preferred peace by military force and the sacrifice of some lives to its attainment by a game of cards and several bottles of whisky. He was a severe Roundhead in his religious views, and believed both cards and whisky to be the invention of the devil himself. He was the only Governor I ever knew who signed a death warrant without visible reluctance, as he held strictly to the old law of an eye for an eye. He was quite prominent in church affairs, and once, when on a visit to the Pacific Coast, at a large banquet, he startled the guests by an indignant and eloquent protest against the loose religious ideas which had found expression at the feast. Soon after his retirement from the gubernatorial office he was made superintendent of the mint, and although displaced by Johnson, he was restored by Grant. He devoted himself to the practice of law in Philadelphia when he was not in public office, but he was not up to date as a practitioner, and attained only moderate success. He suffered serious financial misfortunes a few years before his death, and was little known or felt outside of the narrow circle of his church efforts. He rounded out the patriarchal allotment of years, and died widely and sincerely lamented.



## XXII.

## POLITICAL CONFUSION IN 1855.

Know Nothing Power Broken—The First Republican State Convention Held at Pittsburg—Democratic, Whig, American and Republican Candidates Nominated for Canal Commissioner—Republican Convention Nominated Passmore Williamson then in Prison—Many Fruitless Efforts made to Unite the Three Parties Opposed to Democracy—A Union Effected after an All-night Conference a few weeks before the Election—Too late to Harmonize the Parties—Democrats Carry the State and Legislature—Bigler Elected Senator—Rev. Otis H. Tiffany, an Important American Factor, a Candidate for United States Senator, Originally Selected to Deliver an Address of Welcome to Blaine in New York in 1884—Clerical Jealousy made Him Retire, and Burchard Delivered the Address and Defeated Blaine.

THE revolutionary results of the election of 1854 left the three contending political parties in a condition of most disturbing uncertainty. It was evident that the Whig party had lost its power, as its distinct vote in 1854 was not greatly in excess of one-half the strength of the new Know Nothing organization. A very large majority of the rank and file of the Whigs had deserted to the Know Nothing organization, with little probability that they would ever return. The Whig party had stultified itself by declaring in favor of the Compromise measures of 1850 in its last National convention of 1852, where, after a long struggle between Fillmore, Scott and Webster for the nomination, a compromise was finally effected by which certain Southern Whigs agreed to accept Scott as candidate of the anti-slavery element of the party, on the condition that the convention should approve of the Compromise measures.



That platform paralyzed the Whigs of the North, and made defection from the ranks of the party easy, when Know Nothingism came along with avowed hostility to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

In the early part of 1855 the leaders of the three parties were entirely at sea. The Democrats felt no assurance of success, and in fact they had no promise of victory excepting in the division of the opposition. Their ranks had been badly torn by defection into the Know Nothing order, and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise had quickened the anti-slavery sentiment among the Democrats to an extent that gave them little hope of controlling the State. They had permanently lost the strong Democratic counties of the North, but they had great leaders, and they came to the front early in the year with their State convention, and nominated Arnold Plumer, of Venango, for canal commissioner, the only State office to be filled. Plumer was one of the ablest of the Democratic leaders. He had been state treasurer, was twice elected to Congress, and was one of the most adroit political managers of the State, with a blameless reputation. The Democrats of those days could be relied upon in an emergency to organize in the best possible way to meet it.

The Whig convention was called at the usual period, and I attended it as a delegate, but a careful review of the situation, of which the leaders of the different sections reported, the condition of the party proved that we were an assembly of leaders without rank and file. The Whigs of every part of the state had practically given up the organization in despair, and the only adherents were, as a rule, a few old Scotch-Irish Whigs, most of whom would have been compelled to lie awake at night to decide whether they most hated Know Nothingism or Democracy. It



was evident to all intelligent observers before the Whig convention organized that it had ceased to be a party of power, and that the sooner the funeral ceremonies were performed the stronger would be the hope of getting the stubborn old Whigs into some new attitude, where they could exert their opposition to Democratic authority that had reopened the Pandora box of sectional strife by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Having met, however, and most of the districts with full representation, we went through the motions in regular form and nominated Mr. Henderson, of Washington, for canal commissioner, and passed resolutions in imitation of the two tailors of Tooley Street, London, who held a mass meeting and prefaced the resolutions with the words "We, the people of England."

All of the delegates in the Whig convention were very earnest in their hostility to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the avowed purpose of taking possession of Kansas and Nebraska as slave territories, and while no such confession as the ended usefulness of the Whig party was heard in the proceedings of the body, in the many side conferences held it was decided that earnest efforts should be made to combine the opposition to Democracy in some way that could not then be indicated. The Know Nothing order had chosen its candidate for canal commissioner and nominated Mr. Martin, of Lancaster. He was an old Whig, thoroughly anti-slavery, and it was thought it might be possible to harmonize all of the different elements on him as the opposition candidate to Democracy.

Knowing that the last Whig State convention had been held, and that the organization of the party was practically abandoned, I attended the Republican State convention in the summer of 1855 at



Pittsburg, of which John Allison, of Beaver, was president. It was a mass convention, and all were admitted to its deliberations regardless of district representation. A number of able men were there, and Giddings, the great anti-slavery representative from Ohio, and Bingham, another Ohio representative, who was one of the ablest popular orators in the State, aroused the convention to great enthusiasm by their anti-slavery appeals, and the assurance that the Republican party would speedily control the government. Many private conferences were held, and after very full and careful deliberation it was settled, as we all supposed, that the convention should nominate Peter Martin, the Know Nothing candidate for canal commissioner, as he was heartily in sympathy with every principle of the Republican organization.

If the nomination of Martin had been accomplished it was reasonably certain that the Whigs would voluntarily withdraw their candidate and unite in the movement, although a small percentage of the Whigs would not have accepted any Know Nothing candidate. Everything was moving along very serenely until Mr. Acker, an old Quaker from Bucks County, arose, and, after delivering a most impassioned anti-slavery speech, moved the nomination of Passmore Williamson for canal commissioner, who was then in prison for contempt of court in refusing to make a satisfactory answer to the court as to the whereabouts of a fugitive slave. A torch applied to a powder magazine could not have been more explosive, and in less time than the proceeding could be fairly described the convention was on its feet in a tempest of enthusiasm, and Williamson was declared the nominee of the convention.

Williamson was, of course, an impossible candidate.



His imprisonment for contempt was severely criticised, but it would have been utterly hopeless to make a contest that would make the leading issue a battle with the supreme court of the State on its right to enforce its own process. There was not a ray of hope of uniting the other elements opposed to the Democracy on Williamson, and it would have been utterly useless to attempt to persuade the convention to reconsider its action.

Thus the Whig State convention of 1855 had met only to learn that it ceased to be anything more than a light-weight political ally of some greater organized opposition to the Democracy, and the Republican convention, that was regarded as representing the hopeful party of the future, started out with such revolutionary radicalism that it appeared only as a political suicide.

The campaign dragged along with the three regularly nominated candidates representing the opposition to the Democracy, and of course assuring the success of the Democrats unless a hearty union could be effected. The only State officer to elect was canal commissioner, but the Legislature to be chosen had the choice of a United States Senator, as the previous Legislature had wrangled over the senatorship during the entire session, and adjourned without electing. The office of canal commissioner was of little moment, but the Legislature was regarded as of vital importance, as it involved the choice of a Senator. The leaders of the three opposition parties made very earnest struggles to bring about a union, but many of the old Whigs were obstinate. The Republicans, then embracing only the more radical anti-slavery people of the State, were wildly enthusiastic over Williamson, and the Know Nothings insisted that, as they had a candidate who was a Whig and an



anti-slavery man, he should be accepted by all and receive the united support of the various opposition forces.

The pressure for union increased as the election approached, and finally, after very earnest and often defeated efforts, a conference was called at Harrisburg by representative Know Nothings, Whigs and Republicans to make a last struggle for unity. A large number attended, and they finally decided that three should be chosen from each party to confer on the subject, and any decision agreed to by a majority of each delegation should be accepted as final. The pledge was given that any of the opposition candidates not nominated by the union conference should be withdrawn, as authority had been obtained from all of them to do so. I was chosen as one of the Whig conferees, with John Adams Fisher, of Harrisburg, and Thomas E. Cochran, of York. The American conferees were headed by Rev. Otis H. Tiffany, then prominently connected with Dickinson College, with two associates whose names I do not recall. Senator Meyer, of Bradford, headed the Republican conferees, and Governor Pollock, who had very modest rooms at Coverly's Hotel, where the conference was held, took a very active part in urging the necessity of a cordial agreement.

The conference began at seven o'clock in the evening, and continued until three in the morning. Several times, after heated and irritating discussion, the conference was on the point of breaking up, and twice at different times during the night the motion was made to adjourn without day, but John Adams Fisher, the chairman, arbitrarily ruled the motion out of order, and never permitted a vote to be taken. The Know Nothings felt that they had the butt end of the whip, and with very good reason urged that their candi-



date should be accepted, as they must furnish most of the votes to elect him. Finally disruption was averted by the sagacity of Rev. Dr. Tiffany, who proposed that Thomas Nicholson, long chief clerk in the State treasurer's office, and practically State treasurer himself, and whose record in the Legislature had been very creditable, should be accepted by all as the union candidate for canal commissioner, and that the names of all the others be withdrawn. The proposition, coming as it did from the Know Nothings, was promptly accepted, and the next morning the official announcement was made of the nomination of Nicholson, and the withdrawal of Martin, Henderson and Williamson, but it was too late.

If the union had been accomplished sixty days earlier there is little doubt that Nicholson would have won, but as there were less than two weeks of time to brush away all the obstinacy of the old Scotch-Irish Whigs, to placate the radicalism of the Republicans, and to reconcile the Know Nothings to the great sacrifice they had made, the fusion was not completely effected, and Plumer defeated Nicholson by 11,500 plurality, while Williamson received 7,200 votes, Cleaver, Know Nothing, received over 4,000 votes, and Henderson, Whig, received nearly 3,000 votes, showing a majority of the united opposition against Plumer of 3,000. The Legislature was carried along with the State ticket by the Democrats, giving them one majority in the senate and thirty-two majority in the house, and resulting in the election of Governor Bigler to the Senate.

The Know Nothing movement brought an unusual number of ministers into politics, largely from the Methodist and Baptist Churches, whose people were rather more aggressive than other Protestant denominations in their hostility to Catholics. Many of them



Otis H. Tiffany



were local or lay ministers, and very few of them developed into creditable legislators, while many of them left disreputable records of their brief public careers. While there were a number who did not disgrace the cloth by active participation in politics, the one who stood out most conspicuous as an active politician and consistent Christian gentleman was Dr. Tiffany, who, as I have stated, accomplished the union of the opposition forces at the conference in 1855. He was not only a man of unusual eloquence, but a sagacious leader in Church and State, and always commanded the respect of all who came in contact with him, whether supporting or opposing him.

Hotel accommodations in Harrisburg at that time were very limited, and as nearly all of the parties to the conference were guests at Coverly's Hotel, the house was crowded, and Tiffany and I occupied a small room together. He was regarded as the ablest of all the Know Nothing leaders, and after the conference adjourned our little room was speedily crowded by parties desirous of conferring with him about the situation and management of the campaign. He entertained them until nearly five o'clock, when he said: "Gentlemen, you will please excuse me, I must retire, and if you will give me a minute to say my prayers I will go to bed, and you can continue the conversation as long as you choose." He then knelt at his bedside for a very brief period, arose and prepared himself for bed, bidding us a cheerful good night as he turned in. He was an unusually capable man, and was much beloved even outside of his religious and political associations. He had made a somewhat earnest contest for the United States senatorship in the preceding Legislature, but the struggle became so demoralizing that a man of his aims and methods was hopelessly bowled out of the race, as



in that contest he stood like a clean deuce in a dirty deck.

He ended his career, that was so unusually eminent, in the Methodist ministry in the city of New York, where he stood among the foremost of the ministers of the great metropolis; and had he been permitted to deliver the address of congratulation to Blaine when the ministers met him in New York, just before his defeat for President in 1884, Blaine would have been President instead of Cleveland. He was prominent among the ministers who arranged to have the clergy meet Blaine on his way home from his great campaign. Blaine had fought his battle and had won it, but the irony of fate doomed him to defeat from a cause that was expected to add largely to his success. It had been arranged by those immediately in charge of this meeting of the ministers with Blaine that Tiffany should deliver the address of congratulation, and had he been permitted to do so he would have welcomed Blaine in a speech of great brilliancy and peculiar fitness for the occasion, but some of the older ministers who had not been consulted complained that the assignment had been made without a full conference, and as there were but a few minutes time for consultation before meeting Blaine, the question threatened to develop considerable irritation.

Some one, in the interest of peace, proposed that the oldest minister present should be assigned to the duty. It was a plausible solution of the dispute, and it was accepted. On inquiry it was found that Rev. Dr. Burchard was entitled to the honor of addressing Blaine, and he blurted out his "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion," to a candidate for the Presidency who had just returned from a visit to his sister in Indiana as Mother Superior of a Catholic convent. Blaine missed a great opportunity to save himself



by not noting Burchard's blunder and dismissing it, as he could have done, in a way that would have made it harmless. He told me of the circumstance some time after his defeat, and when I asked him why it was that one of his exceptional readiness had failed on that occasion, he answered that while he had heard the remark, he was so intent in collecting his ideas as to the best answer to be made, that he was not impressed as he ordinarily would have been by the importance of correcting the error. He lost New York by 1,100 votes, and the Burchard blunder cost him much more in New York city alone than would have saved the Empire State and given him the Presidency. Had Dr. Tiffany delivered the address it would have been at once elegant and politic, and would have made the ministers' welcome to Blaine a very material aid to his cause, instead of ending in open and disastrous disgrace.



## XXIII.

## BIRTH OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.

Became a National Organization in 1856—Pittsburg Conference Issues a Call for Republican National Convention—Fremont Nominated for President in Philadelphia—Many Old Line Whigs Support Buchanan for President—Fremont and Fillmore Forces Unite on State and Electoral Tickets Defeated by 3,000 at the October State Election—Buchanan Carries the State by a Thousand Majority over both.

THE elections of 1855 were singularly ragged in results, and clouded the Presidential contest of 1856 with great uncertainty. The Whig party had done its work, and it was practically eliminated from the political forces of the nation. True, after Fillmore had been nominated by the Know Nothings against Fremont, a mass Whig National convention was held in Baltimore without any pretence of regular State or district representation, as the organization was not maintained in any of the States, and indorsed the nomination of Fillmore and Donaldson, the Know Nothing candidates. The old Whigs of the South who had not fallen in with the Democracy on the sectional issue had all become absorbed in the Know Nothing organization, and it was the only party in the Southern States that maintained any organized opposition to the Democrats. In the Southern States the Know Nothings polled in 1855 nearly or quite as large a vote as the usual Whig vote, but the organization lacked the vigor and inspiration of a hopeful National party, and but for the facts that the nomination of Fremont was very objectionable to the conservative Whigs, and that Fillmore was a highly respectable candidate for Pres-



ident, the Know Nothing organization would not have exhibited one-half the strength that was brought to it by a combination of circumstances in 1856.

The year 1856 is memorable for the creation of the Republican party as a National organization. The opposition to the Democracy was not coherent, but was floating around promiscuously as old line Whigs, anti-slavery Democrats, Know Nothings and Republicans. It was evident to any intelligent observer of the situation that if the opposition to the Democrats could be cordially united it would command a decided majority of the votes of the American people. The situation was somewhat like the political condition presented in 1839, when the first Whig National convention was held at Harrisburg and nominated Harrison and Tyler. That convention gathered in the old Anti-Masons, the Whigs who had exhibited power in 1836 and the formidable Democratic elements of the country opposed to Van Buren and his financial policy. There was no vital public issue on which the various elements of the Harrisburg convention of 1839 divided that could not be reconciled. Clay was defeated for President, although a majority of the delegates desired his nomination, solely because he was a high Mason, and the Anti-Masons of the country furnished the large portion of the opposition to Van Buren. They made Clay an impossible candidate, as Seward's proposition to divide the school fund of New York when he was Governor of that State made him an impossible candidate at Chicago in 1860.

The political condition of 1856 differed from that of 1839 in the fact that between the Know Nothings and the Republicans there was an absolutely impassable gulf. The entire Know Nothing element of the South was opposed to slavery agitation, and to every chief article of Republican faith, and a large proportion of



the Know Nothings of the North were strongly conservative on the slavery question and with no affiliation with the Republicans. It became evident soon after the election of 1855 that the Republican party must take the lead and fight a battle single-handed with the Democracy.

The Republican organization had its birth in 1854, when the name was adopted by the more anti-slavery opposition to the Democrats in sections of a number of the States, including New York and Pennsylvania. Michigan is entitled to the credit of holding the first State Republican convention in 1854 that nominated a full State ticket under the distinct Republican banner, and won without any combination with side political forces. It was done under the leadership of Zachariah Chandler, an able and aggressive anti-slavery man who afterward became conspicuous as a Republican United States Senator, and as chairman of the Republican National committee in 1876, and who won for Hayes after a desperate battle ending in the Electoral Commission.

Iowa was carried the same year by a fusion between the Whigs and Republicans, but Michigan stood alone as the only State that had achieved a clean Republican victory. The name Republican had been accepted spasmodically in many localities, and when it became necessary to adopt a name under which to rally the opponents of slavery extension, the leading Representatives of that sentiment in Congress unanimously decided that the new party should be called Republican, in imitation of the Jefferson party whose victory of 1800 laid the foundation for sixty years of Democratic control of the government.

In Pennsylvania the opposition to the Democrats was badly disintegrated and gave very little indication of possible unity. The lack of able and faithful lead-



ership in the Know Nothing organization was a very serious objection to affiliation with that order, and the radical anti-slavery views to which the early Republicans gave expression repelled alike the conservative Whigs and Know Nothings. Pollock was Governor of the State, but not in any sense a political leader. Cameron was in the Know Nothing organization and was smarting under the wounds of his long and bitter contest for Senator during the session of 1855, and his broad, comprehensive knowledge of politics made him earnestly desirous for the unity of the opposing elements, as he hoped to return to the Senate if such a victory could be achieved. Curtin was also in the Know Nothing organization, but was greatly disgusted with its corrupt political leadership and methods, and the old Whigs of the State were simply in retirement without asserting themselves in any way whatever. Repeated consultations by the National leaders in Washington, after the elections of 1855, finally decided that a conference of active Republicans from all the Northern States should be held at Pittsburg early in the winter of 1856, and it was that informal conference that shaped the organization and policy of the National Republican party.

There were a number of able leaders present, all of whom understood the magnitude of the contest they were about to invite, but they felt that the slavery issue had then been pressed upon the nation in such a manner as to require the question of slavery extension to be squarely met and ended by the victory or defeat of the adopted policy of the advocates of slavery. Henry J. Raymond, then editor of the New York "Time," and a politician and writer of great ability, became the controlling leader in the Pittsburg conference, and he prepared the address that was then issued to the people of the United States, including a call



for a Republican National convention to meet in Philadelphia on the 17th of June to nominate candidates for President and Vice-President.

There was not even the pretence of a Republican organization in Pennsylvania. It was without a State committee, and had no machinery in existence by which a single delegate could be elected to the Philadelphia convention, but a large number of volunteer delegates appeared, representing every section of the State. I was among the number. Thaddeus Stevens took quite an active interest in the convention, and personally urged me to attend, hoping that, with a conservative delegation from Pennsylvania, Judge McLean, of the supreme court, could be nominated as the Republican candidate. Knowing how utterly unprepared Pennsylvania was to accept naked Republicanism, I attended the convention, but it was evident before the convention met that the radical element would nominate Fremont by a large majority, and I did not appear as a member. Fremont was nominated over McLean by a vote of 359 to 196, and nearly one-half of McLean's vote came from Pennsylvania.

The nomination of Fremont did not commend itself to the great mass of the old Whigs of Pennsylvania, and I left the convention expecting that I would feel little interest, and take no part in what then seemed to me to be an utterly hopeless battle for the Republican ticket; and but for the violent attitude assumed on the slavery question by the Cincinnati convention that nominated Buchanan, it is more than likely that I would have voted for Buchanan as against Fremont. I had known him personally for many years, and knew him to be great in statesmanship, of unblemished character, and thoroughly and severely conscientious in the discharge of public and private duties.

A number of prominent Whigs immediately severed



their connection with the opponents of Democracy after the nomination of Fremont and openly espoused the cause of Buchanan. Among them were such men as the Randalls, the Whartons, the Ingerrsolls, William B. Reed and others who had been among the leaders in the old Whig party. There were many others, such as Morton McMichael, William M. Meredith and Horace Binney, who were strongly inclined to revolt at the nomination of a Rocky Mountain adventurer, whose whole strength with the people was his romantic career as an explorer, and who was entirely unknown in statesmanship. They all respected Buchanan as one of the old school statesmen of the land, but the platform adopted by the Cincinnati convention that nominated Buchanan so distinctly endorsed the movements and policy of the slave power that many old Whigs were not only compelled to oppose Buchanan's election, but were inspired to make an aggressive battle for the Republican candidates. The general political confusion that prevailed among the opponents of the Democrats greatly strengthened Buchanan, as his admitted ability and thoroughly clean record commanded the respect of even his bitterest foes.

The Democrats were early in the field and held their State convention in March. It was one of the ablest of the many political State conventions I have seen, and Buchanan's distinctive friends had an overwhelming majority of the delegates. Dallas, who had seriously divided the convention in 1852, was practically unfelt in the convention of 1856, and the ablest of the Democratic leaders had come to the front to give the Buchanan cause the highest commendation to the Democrats of the country.

There were no speeches made against Buchanan, but a number of interesting episodes occurred during the proceedings which brought out very positive



expressions in favor of "Pennsylvania's favorite son." The few anti-Buchanan men in the body attempted occasionally to move by indirection to gain some advantage, but they were foiled at every step, and that system of tactics was abandoned after one of the most brilliant speeches I have ever listened to in a State convention, made by Colonel Samuel W. Black, of Pittsburg, who tore the mask off the few mutineers and silenced them until the convention adjourned. I attended the convention as a spectator, and sat close to Black. He was a man of magnificent presence, with an exquisitely molded face that brightened grandly as he poured out his eloquent invective against the hopeless minority. It was a speech to be remembered regardless of the merits of the controversy, and my kind recollections of him brought me the sincerest sorrow when, in scanning the reports of the Seven Days battle on the peninsula, the name of Colonel Black appeared in the list of the dead.

The Democratic State convention nominated Mr. Scott for canal commissioner, Mr. Fry for auditor general, and Mr. Ives for surveyor general, and broadly indorsed the pro-slavery policy of the National administration. There was something of a battle over the platform, as Colonel Stokes, of Westmoreland, one of the most eloquent men of the State, bitterly assailed the policy of the party, but there were very few who dared to make a record against the overwhelming and earnest majority that dominated the body. They felt confident, with the opposition divided into several discordant and more or less belligerent organizations, that the Democrats could win an easy victory.

The defiant attitude assumed by the Democrats in support of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise with violent and revolutionary efforts, made to enslave Kansas and Nebraska, inspired the opponents of Dem-



ocracy to practical action, and I attended a conference in Philadelphia, of which Morton McMichael was the central figure, in which it was decided that a "Union" State convention should be called, and that Whigs, Republicans, Know Nothings and all opposed to the policy of the National government on the slavery question should be invited to attend, to nominate a Union ticket. I was a delegate to the convention, and it was a body composed of very earnest and able men, in which were leading Whigs, Know Nothings and Republicans, and, to harmonize these various elements, we nominated Mr. Cochran, Whig, for canal commissioner; Mr. Phelps, Know Nothing, for auditor general, and Mr. LaPorte, Republican, for surveyor general. They were all men of high character and admitted ability, and there was every indication at that time of a cordial union of the opposition forces, which embraced a majority of the people of the State. A platform was adopted, confined chiefly to the issue of the extension of the slave power, and the contest was entered upon by the Union organization with bright hopes of success.

The cordial unanimity exhibited in the Union State convention by the different elements opposed to the Democrats inspired very general and earnest enthusiasm among the people supporting the new movement, and the Democrats speedily appreciated that they had a very desperate battle on their hands to save the State in October. Had Pennsylvania been lost to Buchanan in the October election he would certainly have been defeated in the Electoral College, and Fremont's election would have been probable. If the electoral vote of Pennsylvania had been transferred from Buchanan to Fremont, Buchanan's majority of the electors would be reduced to six, and the effect of Buchanan's defeat in his home State in October



would certainly have given Illinois to Fremont. In that State Buchanan polled 105,348 votes, with 96,187 for Fremont and 37,449 for Fillmore. If they had made a fusion electoral ticket there as we had in Pennsylvania, the electoral vote would have been given to Fremont, as the combined opposition was 28,283 greater than the Democratic vote, but with or without a fusion electoral ticket the prestige of a Union victory in Pennsylvania would have safely anchored Illinois in the Fremont column. Pennsylvania was thus the pivotal State in the National contest of 1856, as it was in the Lincoln battle of 1860.

The apprehension of the Pennsylvania Democrats as to the result was exhibited soon after the Union ticket was placed in the field by the withdrawal of Senator Timothy Ives, of Potter, from the State ticket for surveyor general, and substituting ex-Representative John Rowe, of Franklin. Some alleged irregularity in Mr. Ives' public record, that would not now be considered for a moment as an impediment to the success of a candidate, was discovered, and the Democrats demanded his declination, as they could not afford to have a single weak point in their line of battle. The contest was fought out not only with earnestness on both sides, but with more or less desperation, and the Democratic ticket was successful by a very narrow majority. The following is the official vote of the State:

CANAL COMMISSIONER.

|                        |                |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Scott, Democrat .....  | 212,886        |
| Cochran, Whig.....     | <u>210,111</u> |
| Scott's majority ..... | 2,775          |

AUDITOR GENERAL.

|                           |                |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Fry, Democrat .....       | 212,468        |
| Phelps, Know Nothing..... | <u>209,261</u> |
| Fry's majority .....      | 3,207          |



## SURVEYOR GENERAL.

|                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Rowe, Democrat .....      | 212,623 |
| LaPorte, Republican ..... | 208,888 |
| Rowe's majority .....     | 3,735   |

Many interesting incidents of this great struggle, in which the Republican party made its first appearance as a National political factor, are worthy of record, and will occupy another chapter.



## XXIV.

## COL. JOHN W. FORNEY.

Forney Conducted the Campaign for Buchanan with Masterly Ability—

His Intimate Relations with Buchanan—Forney was to be Editor of the Washington National Organ and Senate Printer if Buchanan Succeeded—That Assured Him Distinction in His Profession and Ample Fortune—Aggressive Opposition to Forney as Editor of the Democratic Organ from the South—His Jamison Letter, brought out in the Forrest Divorce Case, made the Breach—Buchanan Assents to the Sacrifice of Forney—Forney Advised of it by Buchanan's Secretary—Continued His Battle Confident that Buchanan would do Him Justice—A Cabinet Position Tendered to Forney—Buchanan Forced to Recall it—Buchanan asked the Legislature to Elect Forney United States Senator—Cameron Combines the Republicans with the Democratic Votes of Lebo, Maneer and Wagenseller and Defeats Forney—A Foreign Mission Tendered to Forney—Final Estrangement between Buchanan and Forney.

**C**OLONEL John W. Forney was chairman of the Democratic State committee in 1856, and had absolute charge of the great battle that was fought for the election of Buchanan, to whom he was romantically attached. He had received his chief education at the printer's case in Lancaster, Mr. Buchanan's home city, and gained National distinction as editor of the "Pennsylvanian" in the contest of 1844 between Polk and Clay. He proved himself a foeman worthy even of the steel of one of the most accomplished and forceful Whig editors of that day, Joseph R. Chandler, of the "United States Gazette." He was called to the leadership by Buchanan himself, and Forney developed grand resources not only as a political organizer, but in his varied methods to inspire the people of the State to sup-



port the only hopeful candidate for President ever presented by Pennsylvania. I saw him many times during the contest, and he always seemed to be wholly absorbed in what he evidently regarded as the great battle of his life. His wife and children spent a large portion of the summer at Wheatland, Buchanan's beautiful home on the outskirts of Lancaster city, and from the time the political lines were formed in the early midsummer until the campaign closed with the election of Buchanan, Forney never allowed himself so much as a whole day at one time to visit his chief and his family.

Buchanan and Forney were entirely different in temperament. Buchanan was naturally cold, calculating and reserved, while Forney was nothing if not enthusiastic and impetuous. Forney was in his personal attributes as lovable as a woman, with a face and form befitting an Apollo, and his dominating qualities were gentleness and affection, but when brought into battle he was sublimely heroic.

It was Buchanan's own proposition, dictated not only by his affection for Forney, but by his sense of duty, that Forney was to receive as his reward, in the event of Buchanan's election, the editorship of the "Washington Union," the organ of the administration, and the Senate printing. His whole ambition was in the line of his profession, in which he stood among the most eminent in the land, and he would have regarded it as a crowning triumph of his editorial career to be the chief editor of the National organ of the Buchanan administration, while the Senate printing, then one of the profitable abuses of the age, that was by universal custom accorded to the organ of the administration, would have given him ample fortune.

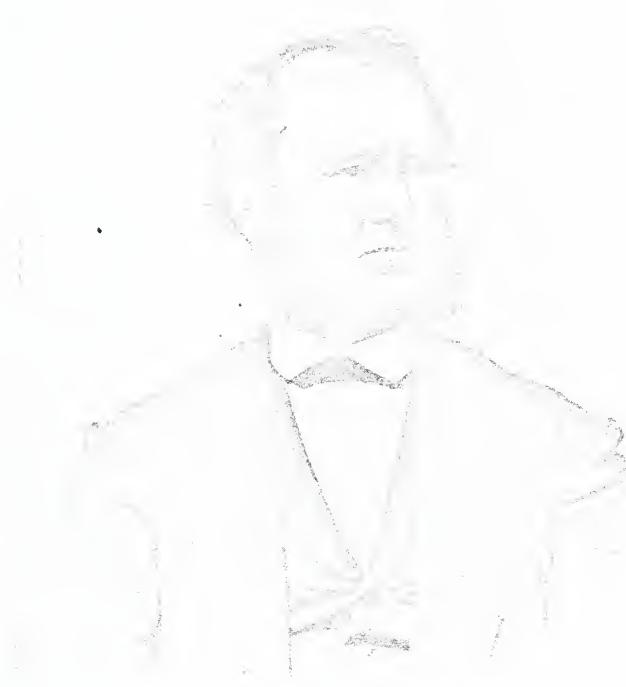
Buchanan had many times spoken to Forney, in the presence of Forney's family and others, of the



gratification it would afford him, if elected President, to give Forney what he then regarded as the highest editorial honors, with a handsome fortune added in the Senate printing. Unfortunately it became whispered in the South that Forney would become the editor of the organ of the administration if Buchanan was elected, and very earnest remonstrances came to Buchanan from leading men of the South, many of them demanding a pledge from Buchanan that Forney should be provided for in some other way. The commonly accepted idea at that time was that Forney was not acceptable to the South because he was not regarded as entirely sound on the slavery question, but that assumption is erroneous. Forney had fought the battle of the South in Philadelphia with great courage and ability for years, but one of his romantic attachments was for Edwin Forrest, the actor, and he profoundly sympathized with Forrest in his struggle for a divorce from Mrs. Forrest. The case attracted not only national but international interest, as Mrs. Forrest was a prominent English actress.

Forrest, whether justly or unjustly, was entirely convinced of the infidelity of his wife, but his evidence, although very strong, was not conclusive, as was shown by the verdict of the New York jury. Forrest had proceeded for a divorce on statutory grounds, to which his wife answered, demanding that the divorce be awarded to her on statutory grounds, and the jury gave the divorce to Mrs. Forrest, with \$3,000 annual alimony, and giving her the right to marry, while denying it to Forrest. I met Forrest frequently with Forney during the last decade of Forrest's life, and Forney always exhibited agonizing sympathy with Forrest, and I could well understand how Forney had been misled by his ardent attachment for Forrest into writing the Jamison letter, in





John W. Farney



which he suggested that the suspected lover of Mrs. Forrest should be gotten into his cups and led to a confession of his criminal relations with Forrest's wife.

This letter was brought out in the Forrest trial, and while it was defended or excused by few, if any, the Southern journals and leading public men of the South criticised Forney with great severity. His many friends, who knew him personally and knew his strong affectionate temperament, and his unqualified devotion to Forrest, well understood that Forney was seeking to obtain only what he believed to be the truth, but Southern chivalry, however shadowed by felonious gallantries, accepted Forney's error as unpardonable. It was this circumstance that made the leading men of the South protest against Forney becoming the oracle of the Democratic National administration.

Buchanan was a man of most methodical and industrious habits, and he never employed a secretary until well on in the campaign of 1856. His letters were all written in his own hand, in almost copper-plate style, but the voluminous correspondence of the campaign compelled him finally to ask Forney for a secretary to assist him, and Forney sent him William V. McKean. McKean remained with Buchanan a month or more, and saw the increasing demand made upon Buchanan from day to day for a pledge that Forney should not be the editor of the National organ. Several weeks before the October election Buchanan dictated a letter to McKean, giving a pledge that Forney should not become editor of the "Washington Union," in the event of his election. McKean wrote and mailed the letter without exhibiting his feeling to Buchanan, asked permission to make a hurried visit to his home, and came to Philadelphia and informed Forney what Buchanan had done, and declared his purpose to resign his posi-



tion as Buchanan's secretary. Forney was greatly distressed, but doubtless felt what he said to McKean, that if Buchanan had given the pledge he was moved by imperative necessities, and he could be safely trusted to do justice to Forney. McKean was persuaded to return and perform his duties as Buchanan's secretary until the close of the campaign.

Colonel Forney well understood the situation presented by the October election in 1856. While he had secured for his State ticket mere nominal majorities, he knew that it was practically a drawn battle, and that the November struggle would be even more desperate than the one that had just ended. Buchanan had not given an intimation of his pledge to refuse to Forney what Forney most of all things desired, nor did Forney intimate to Buchanan that he knew of the pledge that Buchanan had made. He had faith in Buchanan's fidelity, and his interest and efforts in the desperate battle were increased rather than abated. He was confronted with the most appalling charges of fraud, circumstantially portrayed, accusing him of using many thousands of fraudulent naturalization papers, and the feeling of the Union leaders and people that they had been defrauded out of victory in October made them rally with increased desperation in the November struggle.

They not only charged the use of false naturalization papers and other election frauds, but nearly a score of men were later convicted of having perpetrated frauds upon the ballot at that election. The Union leaders called a general conference at Harrisburg, that I attended, and the response was so general from every section of the State that we met in the hall of the house of representatives, and it was filled with as earnest a body of men as I ever saw assembled. In the white heat of such a contest it was not difficult



for the Union leaders to accept the conviction that they had been defrauded out of their victory, and they there not only resolved to renew the struggle with increased energy, but to inaugurate a relentless war against the corruption of the ballot.

I met Colonel Forney repeatedly during the contest between the two elections, and toward the close of the campaign he was utterly exhausted mentally and physically, but he stood to his guns until he scored a narrow victory, giving Buchanan only a thousand majority over the combined vote of Fremont and Fillmore. The union effected on the State ticket between the several organizations opposed to Democracy was finally, after much negotiation, carried to the arrangement of a Union electoral ticket. There was considerable difficulty with some of the Know Nothing leaders, as they were very much averse to the radical views of the Republicans, but it was finally agreed that there should be but one electoral ticket voted by the three organizations that had united on a Union State ticket. One elector was to be sacrificed by printing two electoral tickets for the Union party, one of which had as its first candidate for elector the name of Millard Fillmore and the other had as the first candidate for elector the name of John C. Fremont.

General Cameron came to the front as a supporter of Fremont, and was placed on the ticket as an elector-at-large, and the electors were divided between Whigs, Know Nothings and Republicans. The agreement was very explicit, and, to avoid all misunderstanding, it was formulated in writing. The electors were each solemnly pledged to give a solid vote for either Fremont or Fillmore if the electoral vote of the State would elect either to the Presidency. If, however, the entire electoral vote of Pennsylvania would not



give success to either of the Union candidates, then the Union electors, if chosen by the people, should divide the vote of the State between Fremont and Fillmore in proportion to the vote received by each. As Fillmore's name headed one ticket and Fremont's name headed the other, it was very easy to determine the relative strength of the two candidates at the polls. There is no doubt that if the Union electoral ticket had been successful in the State the agreement would have been carried out with hearty fidelity, but, as the ticket was defeated, all dispute on the subject ended.

The very small majority received by Buchanan in his native State that had voted for every Democratic candidate for President for more than half a century, with the single exception of Harrison and Taylor, who were elected in sweeping political cyclones, was very mortifying alike to Buchanan and the Democratic leaders, but under the conditions which confronted them they were glad to escape with any majority. Had the Know Nothing element been faithful to the compact, both the State and National elections of 1856 would have been against Buchanan. John P. Sanderson, who had been senator from Lebanon, and one of the editors of the "Daily News," of Philadelphia, was in charge of the American wing of the combination, and his private conferences with Forney were discovered some weeks before the election, and finally a letter from Sanderson to Forney was intercepted, in which Sanderson invited Forney to meet him and come in by the back door. This was after the October election, and the exposure came like a bombshell, but it accomplished nothing beyond perhaps intensifying the conservative or pro-slavery Know Nothings in their hostility to the Union cause. The official vote for President was: Buchanan, 230,710;



Fremont, 147,510; Fillmore, 82,175, giving Buchanan 1,025 majority over the combined vote of the opposition.

Immediately after the election Buchanan informed Forney of the pledge he had given to exclude Forney from the editorship of the National organ, and asked Forney to indicate what other position he would prefer. Forney, without reflection, suggested a cabinet appointment, to which Buchanan promptly assented. It would have been a mistake for Forney to enter the cabinet. Great as he was as a political organizer and writer, he was not distinguished for executive qualities, and he could not have lived with his family on the salary paid a cabinet officer, but he was doubtless impelled by the desire to vindicate himself against his assailants in the South.

I met Forney soon after this arrangement had been made between Buchanan and himself, and at his suggestion I wrote a Philadelphia letter to the New York "Tribune," predicting the appointment of Forney to a cabinet position and highly commending the selection. As soon as his name was publicly discussed as a probable cabinet officer the same Southern leaders who had driven him from the editorship of the National organ became vehement in their protests against his admission to the cabinet, and Buchanan finally yielded and advised Forney that he must recall the tender. The South had voted solidly for Buchanan with the exception of Maryland, and he felt that he could not commence his administration with formidable hostility from the most powerful section that supported him.

Forney was again asked to state the appointment he could accept from Buchanan, and he named the senatorship, to which Buchanan cordially assented, and wrote a personal letter to Canal Commissioner



Mott, of Pike County, urging the nomination of Forney, who, until then, had not been thought of as a candidate for the senatorship. It had been generally accepted that Henry D. Foster, then a member of the house, who had been in Congress, and was a nominee for Governor in 1860, would be chosen. A Pennsylvania President just on the threshold of the immense power of the National administration, could successfully dictate to the Legislature, and Forney was nominated, but while there was no sign of open rebellion when the nomination was made, the demoralization of the party was visible to all, and many of the Democrats who voted for him, although they joined in the universal and violent denunciations of the three Democrats who voted against him, lost no sleep in worrying over Forney's defeat. The Legislature had three Democratic majority on joint ballot, and three Democratic representatives, Lebo and Wagenseller, of Schuylkill, and Manceer, of York, voted for Cameron and gave him the election.

Thus Forney lost the third position he had reason to expect from the Buchanan administration, and both he and Buchanan were profoundly mortified and humiliated by the action of the Legislature.

It is due to Buchanan to say that he was earnestly desirous of rewarding Forney in any satisfactory way that was within his power. Forney had been fortunate, through some friends in Washington, in acquiring a small fortune for that time, and he had placed it in Mr. Buchanan's hands as trustee for Mrs. Forney, as Forney was not conspicuous as an economist. Buchanan's next offer was to give the German mission to Forney, and the President had personally arranged so that Forney should receive, in addition to his salary as minister, \$5,000 annually from some commercial interests. Buchanan urged Forney to accept it,



as he could live very comfortably on his income, educate his children and save money.

Forney was inclined to accept it as Mr. Buchanan was very earnest in urging it, but Mrs. Forney peremptorily refused her assent, and Buchanan's offer was declined. That was the beginning of the end of Forney's close relations with Buchanan. Buchanan felt disappointed at Forney's refusal of the offer of the German mission, and the chilly breath of estrangement had entered between them. Buchanan's last offer was a proposition to give Forney a large amount of postoffice printing, but Forney could not see his way clear to accept it, and, smarting keenly under his ostracism by the South, he decided that an independent editorial career was his line of duty and the best prospect of success, and the result was the establishment in Philadelphia of "The Press" in August, 1857.



## XXV.

## CAMERON'S DEFEAT OF FORNEY.

Forney's Desperate Battle for Buchanan Greatly Inflamed the Supporters of Fremont and Fillmore—They Openly Declared that the State Election was Carried by Fraud—When Forney was Nominated for Senator They were Ready to make any Combination to Defeat Him—Cameron Not Acceptable to the Republicans, but the Desire to Defeat Forney Dominated—Senator Charles B. Penrose Managed Cameron's Contest—A Republican Committee Visits Lebo, Maneer and Wagenseller—The Republicans finally Agree to Cast One Solid Vote for Cameron to give the Democratic Opponents of Forney a Chance to Defeat Him—Interesting Incidents of the Senatorial Election in the Hall of the House—Stirring Scene after the Roll Call—Lebo, Maneer and Wagenseller Compelled to Leave their Hotels.

THE Presidential campaign of 1856 was a revelation to the old-time political leaders. Fremont was nominated by a free-for-all convention that selected a man unknown in statesmanship for the Presidency with a radical Republican platform, and the Democrats naturally calculated on an easy victory, but they were speedily confronted by a tidal wave of impulsive politics, inspired by the sincerest and profoundest conviction on the slavery question, with largely new and strange leadership. College professors, with a very large proportion of their graduates, and many ministers, were for the first time in the front rank of political disputation, and the Democrats were appalled from time to time as their own leaders deserted and joined in the new political crusade against slavery.

Governor Reeder, of Easton, the most forceful intellect of all the Democrats in the State, and who



had been Pierce's Governor of Kansas, startled his party in the State and country by announcing his purpose to support Fremont. John M. Read, who had battled in the Democratic ranks for a full generation, and who was the leader of the Philadelphia bar, surprised his party associates by taking the stump for Fremont. David Wilmot and Galusha A. Grow, the two great leaders of the Democracy of the Northern tier, were promptly at the front under the Fremont banner, as was J. Kennedy Moorehead, the strongest Democratic leader of Allegheny. It was the most earnest practical campaign I have ever witnessed in Pennsylvania and it was an educational campaign on the Republican side from start to finish. They not only held large mass meetings, but they had their speakers in almost every township in the State. Local mass meetings were held in the schoolhouses and at the cross-roads where the country people could be gathered, and a class of stump speakers, unknown as a rule in previous campaigns, delivered able and impressive appeals to the masses.

The Democrats were put upon their mettle, and the many able Pennsylvania campaigners, and a host of others from different States, were heard on the hustings in Buchanan's home State to an extent never before known in political conflicts. When Mr. Ives was withdrawn from the State ticket simply because of some alleged official irregularity that did not involve any criminal purpose, the Democratic convention was recalled to meet at Chambersburg, where I then resided, and I listened most intently to Colonel Forney's great speech before the convention in which he outlined the battle with unusual candor, as he then fully appreciated the desperate struggle that confronted him. He predicted disunion in the event of Fremont's election, and made a most eloquent and impassioned



appeal for the election of Buchanan as the only safety for the unity of the Republic. He was my guest at dinner during the meeting of the convention, and we spent an hour alone over cigars, during which he poured out the intensity of his earnestness for Buchanan's election to prevent fraternal strife, and personally appealed to me to join him in his great work. I told him that the Cincinnati platform made Buchanan an impossible candidate, much as I respected him and little as I hoped from Fremont.

The result in Pennsylvania has already been given in these notes. The several elements in opposition could not be completely united in local contests, and the Democrats elected fifteen of the twenty-five Congressmen, but John Hickman, one of the fifteen Democrats elected, broke with Forney against Buchanan, and ultimately became one of the Republican leaders of the House, and William Montgomery, of Washington, another of the Democrats elected, became a Douglas leader against Buchanan. The senate stood fifteen Democrats to eighteen opposition, and the house had fifty-three Democrats to forty-seven opposition, giving the Democrats six majority in the house and the opposition three majority in the senate, leaving three Democratic majority on joint ballot. The nomination of Forney for United States Senator, having been literally forced by President-elect Buchanan, was a very bitter pill for Henry D. Foster and his friends. Foster was a member of the house, having come to the popular branch of the Legislature after having served in Congress, solely for the purpose of making himself United States Senator. He was a man of strong intellectual qualities, and personally a universal favorite because of his very amiable attributes. He came into the support of Forney, but without visible cordiality, and there was a very strong



rebellious undercurrent of Democratic sentiment against the President-elect controlling the Democratic nomination for Senator against the known wishes of the Legislature.

It was this demoralization, deep-seated, but not visible on the surface, that opened the doors for Lebo, Maneer, and Wagensesler, three Democratic members of the house, to betray Forney and elect Cameron. The opposition members were smarting under the defeat that Forney had given them in October, and the disposition was very general to avenge the wrong they believed, he had done them and their cause. There were very few of the opposition members who were friendly to Cameron, and certainly not one-fourth of their entire number would have preferred him as their candidate for Senator; but Cameron, with his exceptional shrewdness as a political manager, saw that he could depend upon the resentments against Forney among the opposition members to support him if he could assure them of his ability to defeat Forney. Cameron was most fortunate in having in the senate as one of his few earnest friends Charles B. Penrose, grandfather of the present Senator, Boies Penrose, who had just been chosen to the senate from Philadelphia. He had been in the senate a quarter of a century before from Cumberland County, was greatly disappointed in not being called to the Harrison cabinet in 1841, and resigned the speakership of the senate to accept a department position at Washington. He was a man of ripe experience and great sagacity in politics, and he was very earnest in his desire to punish Forney, and quite as earnest in his desire to promote his friend, General Cameron.

No one in the opposition caucus ventured to nominate Cameron as the candidate against Forney, for the reason that it would not have prevailed, but Cameron



had the positive assurance from Representatives Lebo, Maneer and Wagenseller, all Democrats, that they would vote for him if their votes could elect him. Cameron communicated that information to Penrose. As the Democratic majority on joint ballot was only three, the defection of three votes with the united opposition would give Cameron the election. Penrose very shrewdly stated to the Republican caucus that he had good reason to believe that if the opposition members would unite in the support of General Cameron he could command a sufficient number of Democratic votes to elect him. The caucus refused to take any action on the subject until the members could have absolute information as to the Democratic defection, and Penrose finally proposed that three members of the caucus, in whom the caucus could have implicit confidence, and whose discretion could be fully trusted, should be conducted to the presence of three Democratic members who proposed to vote for Cameron, and receive the assurance from them and report at a later meeting of the caucus.

Cameron at once arranged with Lebo, Maneer and Wagenseller to meet the committee of the opposition caucus at Omit's Hotel, and give the assurance required, and the committee reported to the caucus that they had seen the three Democratic members of the Legislature, whose names they were not then at liberty to divulge, who pledged their sacred honor that if the opposition members united in the support of Cameron they would give him their votes and elect him. The only persons on the Cameron side who knew of the arrangement with Lebo, Maneer and Wagenseller to vote for Cameron, were Cameron himself, his son Donald, George Bergner and John J. Patterson, and the younger Cameron, with Bergner and Patterson, were Cameron's skirmishing force, and they watched the



rear of Omit's Hotel as Lebo, Maneer and Wagenseller were admitted by the back yard to Cameron's room, where the opposition caucus committee was assembled, and when they saw the three Democratic members safely inside, they dispersed.

The opposition caucus was somewhat distrustful, and instead of nominating Cameron for Senator, they adopted a resolution that they would give him a united vote on one ballot, but that the obligation to vote for Cameron was not to go beyond that period. There were many reluctant votes given in support of the resolution as a large proportion of the opposition members were positively hostile to Cameron, but they were intensely inflamed against Forney, and they believed that Cameron had severed his connection with Democracy, and if elected to the Senate would be opposed to the Buchanan administration.

At that time the Legislature did not vote for Senator in the separate bodies as they do now, and no vote was taken for Senator until the joint convention met, when the compact was carried out to the letter, and Cameron was elected over Forney for a full-term senatorship. The whole arrangement was conducted with such secrecy that not one of the opposition legislators had any idea as to what Democrats had bolted, and the Democrats themselves did not doubt the fidelity of Lebo, Maneer and Wagenseller until they cast their votes in the joint convention. The three bolting Democrats had not only refused to vote for the regular Democratic candidate for Senator, but they voted for, and elected as Senator, the man who had been at the head of the Fremont electoral ticket in the last campaign, and their action was an absolute betrayal of the plighted faith of the party that elected them.

A hurricane of resentment struck Lebo, Maneer and



Wagenseller. Many of the Democratic members of the house refused to recognize them. The Pennsylvania Hotel, where they boarded, required them at once to find another boarding house, and all the prominent hotels of the city refused them admission, compelling them to accept the hospitality of obscure private rooms. The Democrats of the senate and house drew up a formal protest against the admission of Cameron to the Senate, signed by all the members, alleging that his election was tainted with corruption, and urging that the validity of his election be carefully inquired into, but as no specific evidence of corruption could be presented, beyond the fact that three Democrats had voted for a Republican for Senator, the Senate could not take cognizance of the protest, and Cameron was logically admitted to the Senate without question.

The spectacle in the hall of the house of representatives when the joint convention met to elect a United States Senator was one long to be remembered. There was quiet anxiety on the part of the opposition, and sullen apprehension among the Democrats. There were no boisterous demonstrations of any kind. The opposition were hopeful, but not entirely confident, as only three of their number knew where the Democratic votes were to come from, and the Democrats felt that there was some subtle miasma in the political atmosphere, but they were bewildered in attempting to locate it.

Senator Taggart, opposition, of Northumberland, was president of the senate, and presided over the joint convention. He had been one of the most violent opponents of Cameron two years before in the Know Nothing jangle, and had written the most defamatory paragraphs against Cameron issued to the public by a number of senators and representatives. He was more open and defiant against Cameron than any mem-



ber of the Legislature only two years before, but Cameron took summary vengeance upon him, and before a year had elapsed he saw that Cameron was a dangerous man for him to quarrel with. Taggart's father was the responsible head of the Northumberland Bank, then a very sound and successful country banking institution. Senator Taggart was its solicitor, and the family largely depended upon the income from the bank for its livelihood. Cameron arranged with his brother, William Cameron, of Lewisburg, who was then a large stockholder in the Northumberland Bank, to quietly purchase a majority of the stock, and he succeeded in doing so. The result was that at the next election the entire Taggart family were turned out and the friends of Cameron put in their places. After two years of experience in wrangling Senator Taggart made satisfactory terms with Cameron, and he earnestly supported Cameron's election in 1857.

Cameron was not forgetful of the service rendered him, as he earnestly supported Taggart for Governor against Curtin in 1860, but without success, and after Cameron became Secretary of War, and the army list was enlarged, he appointed Senator Taggart the first paymaster in the regular army from civil life. This gave Taggart a life office, and he felt that Cameron had fulfilled his bond.

When the joint convention was called to order the profoundest silence prevailed throughout the vast assemblage, as the hall was crowded to its utmost capacity. When the roll-call began there was no break until nearly half the list had been called. The Democrats generally voted for Forney, but there were a few who gave Foster a complimentary vote, intending to change their votes before the result would be announced, while the opposition members voted solidly for Cameron. When the name of Lebo was reached



he startled all the members present, with the exception of the members of the committee who had conferred with the bolting Democrats, by announcing the name of Simon Cameron in distinct tones.

The vote of Lebo came like a thunderclap from an unclouded sky to the Democrats, and one of their leaders arose and attempted to make an impassioned appeal to the Democratic members to cast a united vote for their candidate, but he was speedily called to order and reasonable quiet was finally restored. The opposition members felt confident that the needed number of Democratic votes would come from somewhere, and the Democrats realized that Lebo would not have voted alone for Cameron, and that there must be other Democratic votes yet to come. Maneer's name was called soon after, and he, in a feeble voice, announced his vote for Cameron. His vote with that of Lebo assured Cameron's election with the united opposition vote, and of course the united opposition vote was assured when the defeat of Forney was clearly within their power. There were a few soft hisses, but silence was promptly restored, and the list was called on until nearly the close, when the name of Wagen-seller was announced, and he declared for Cameron in a distinct and defiant tone.

When the calling of the roll closed, J. Lawrence Getz, speaker of the house, who sat beside Speaker Taggart, rose up and attempted to make a most inflammatory speech, but Taggart, who was a man of powerful physical force, took him by the arm and forced him back into his chair, telling him, in terms loud enough for all to hear, not to make a fool of himself. This comic feature of an occasion that was verging close to tragedy, called out the humor of the opposition members, and while the Democrats stormed, the opposition responded in hearty laughter, and in a few minutes



Speaker Taggart announced the election of Cameron, and the adjournment of the convention without delay. Donald Cameron, with Patterson, was standing on the left of the speaker, close to the rear window, and as soon as the result was announced, they hoisted the window, sprang out on to the pavement six feet below, and rushed down to Omit's Hotel, where General Cameron was waiting, and informed him of his election. He immediately started with his son to his country home, and did not return to the city until the next day.

It was with much difficulty that Lebo, Maneer and Wagenseller got away from the Capitol, and they would not have escaped violence but for the fact that they were promptly surrounded by a number of able-bodied men, who protected them to their hotels, where they were greeted with dismissal by the landlords. They were allowed to occupy their seats during the remainder of the session, but they were severely ostracised by all the Democrats and not much respected by most of the opposition. They were all very ordinary men who never could have gained any distinction in public life, but they made their humble names immortal in the political memories of the State by the one act of reversing a Democratic majority in the Legislature and electing a Republican Senator.



## XXVI.

## BUCHANAN AND BLACK.

The Opposing Political Characteristics of Buchanan and Cameron—Buchanan Unjustly Censured as Sympathizing with the Rebellion—The Circumstances of His Election—The Solid South had Chosen Him President—Judge Black's Story of the Inner Movements of the Buchanan Cabinet—Interesting Incident of Black's Correction of Buchanan's Answer to the Southern Commissioners—Black as Buchanan's Ablest and Most Devoted Friend.

GENERAL CAMERON entered upon his second term in the Senate simultaneously with the inauguration of President Buchanan. He had first entered the Senate as Buchanan's successor, simultaneously with Buchanan's appearance as premier of the Polk administration, and in both instances he was an irritating thorn in the side of Buchanan. No two men could be more unlike than were Buchanan and Cameron in temperament, in taste, in method and in the trend of their intellectual forces.

Buchanan was a painstaking student, conservative, commanding respect rather than affection from his associates, while Cameron was aggressive, always looking to the end to be attained rather than to the means employed, and always cherishing the warmest attachment for his friends. Buchanan was trained in statesmanship and in its severest school. His first service in Congress, covering a number of years, was as a Federalist, and while he later accepted the Democratic faith with absolute sincerity and adhered to it unfalteringly, he was not a leader whose keen perception and prompt action could be relied upon to guide a party in an emergency. He was a statesman



of the old school that sedulously discredited innovations, while Cameron without claims to statesmanship was a consummate politician, a man of broad intellectual force and capable of employing his faculties to the uttermost when the occasion demanded it.

Cameron could be patient and conservative, or keen and aggressive, as occasion demanded, and when the new problems arose which culminated in civil war his adaptability to new conditions was vastly greater than that of Buchanan. Buchanan adhered to the theories of old-school statesmanship. He believed in the resolutions of 1798, which were known to have come from the pens of Jefferson and Madison, and that made Buchanan invest them with sanctity, while Cameron, in his eminently practical way, never took pause over the traditions or records of the past when new conditions and new necessities confronted him.

If North and South had taken counsel with Cameron during the period of Buchanan's administration, civil war would have been averted and slavery preserved. Every new problem that came up Cameron was ready to meet in an equitable and practicable way, and when war came he was one of the foremost to declare that slavery must be overthrown. There never was any intercourse between Buchanan as President and Cameron as Senator beyond the necessary official courtesies. They had parted in their political paths as early as 1845, when Cameron became Buchanan's successor in the Senate, and during the four years of the Buchanan administration Cameron ranked as a conservative Republican.

President Buchanan has been very unjustly censured as largely responsible for the precipitation of civil war, and for alleged disloyalty to the government during the war. Those yet living who knew



him need not be told that he would have given his life if necessary for the preservation of the peace and unity of the Republic. He was responsible for permitting the South to pursue its policy looking to secession until it was too late to halt it, but when secession came he took a bold stand in favor of the maintenance of the Union, and while profoundly deplored the war against the South that had made him President, he never uttered a sentence during the war that was not in favor of the union of the States, and the employment of war to any extent necessary to accomplish it. He exhibited a great interest in public affairs, although in a very unostentatious way, and wrote hundreds of letters to his Democratic friends always displaying absolute loyalty to the government.

In 1863, when it was feared that the supreme court of Pennsylvania would declare the National conscription law unconstitutional, Buchanan laid aside the delicacy that he always exhibited in his relations with judges, by writing a most earnest letter to Chief Justice Woodward, appealing to him not to commit such a wrong against the country and the Democratic party; but his patriotic counsel was unheeded, and Woodward fell in the race for Governor because the loyalty of the court and of its chief justice was distrusted.

It should be remembered that Mr. Buchanan entered the Presidency under very peculiar circumstances and conditions. He did not receive a majority vote in a Northern State with the single exception of Pennsylvania, where he had a majority of little more than one thousand. California, Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey and Pennsylvania gave him their electoral votes, but there were large majorities against him in Illinois and Indiana, and smaller majorities against him in California and New Jersey. On the other hand,



Fremont did not receive in all the slave States over one thousand votes. To be precise, he had 308 in Delaware, 314 in Kentucky, 281 in Maryland and 291 in Virginia, and yet, receiving only the vote of a single section of the Union, Buchanan had less than half of a million plurality over him.

The contest was conducted entirely on sectional issues. They were forced upon the Democrats by the radical and aggressive Republicanism that had sprung into being in great proportions almost in a day, and the solid South gave Buchanan a majority of the popular vote in every State excepting only Maryland, where Fillmore received some 8,000 majority over Buchanan. While North and South were intensely inflamed by the vehemence with which the sectional issue was pressed by the Republican leaders, Buchanan was chosen President solely because the South had stood by him in almost unbroken column, while a large majority of the Northern States had voted against him, and in all except Pennsylvania the majority refused to accept him as the ruler of the Republic. With all of Buchanan's severely conscientious devotion to justice he could not but be profoundly impressed with his obligation to the South that had come forward and rescued him from the overwhelming majority of his own section.

Buchanan's fundamental error as President was in assuming that old conditions must continue to govern. He did not appreciate the fact that a new era had dawned upon the nation that could not be turned backward or even halted. He regarded the immense Republican majority in the North as a sudden ebullition of sectional passion that would speedily run its course and perish. He believed that his election to the Presidency was a final judgment that must settle the sectional dispute on the basis of the Compromise



measures of 1850. So confident was he of the correctness of this assumption that in his inaugural address he foreshadowed the then not yet proclaimed judgment of the Supreme Court of the United States in the Dred Scott case, which was regarded by him and by the South generally as the final action needed to restore sectional unity.

This error was possible to Buchanan for the simple reason that he conscientiously adhered to the old school of statesmanship that had been reverenced for more than two generations, and that he believed would always command the reverence of the nation. He started on his administration entirely confident that the sectional disturbance would be quieted, and that he would be enabled to retire from his high official trust with the country restored to tranquillity.

Had Buchanan's wishes prevailed with his party, there is little reason to doubt that the sectional agitation that grew in intensity during his entire term would have been measurably or wholly restrained. The South felt that the final triumph of slavery had been won; that its right to occupy the territories was no longer to be questioned, and that even the right of the Southerners taking and holding slaves in transit in free States would be accepted as the law of the land. The hope of new slave States in the territory acquired from Mexico had perished, and the South immediately staked everything on the issue of forcing slavery into Kansas and Nebraska, where climatic and all other natural conditions were against it. The policy of the violent introduction of slavery into those territories had been inaugurated under Pierce, and unfortunately had been tolerated if not approved by him.

Buchanan was thus early confronted with the



problem of taking issue with the South in its then settled policy of forcing slavery into Northern territory, or permitting the violent and in every way inexcusable crusade to go on. To break with the South at the threshold of his power would have been fatal to his administration, and he would have been openly impaled as an ingrate. He naturally decided not to throw himself into the breach against the policy of the South, but hoped to restrain it and prevent it from further inflaming sectional prejudices. This was the fatal step that Buchanan made at the beginning, but in judging him strong extenuating circumstances should be given due weight. He fully agreed with the South on the policy of coercion, and knowing his views on the subject, the South persisted in its midsummer madness until secession had actually begun after the election of Lincoln. It is doubtful whether under any circumstances he could have restrained the secession of the Cotton States after Lincoln's election, and the greatest struggle of his life came after he had fully awakened to the fact that the tolerant policy of his administration had led to the actual severance of the States.

I never fully understood the inside movements of the Buchanan cabinet immediately before and at the time of the transition of the cabinet and the administration to open hostility to the South and secession, until two years after the war began, when I enjoyed a most interesting and instructive all-night talk with ex-Chief Justice Black, who had been first Attorney General and then premier of the Buchanan administration. I had known Black well for many years, and, like all who knew him, not only respected, but loved him. He was one of the most fascinating conversationalists I have ever met, and there was hardly a line of Shakespeare or the Bible or a poetic



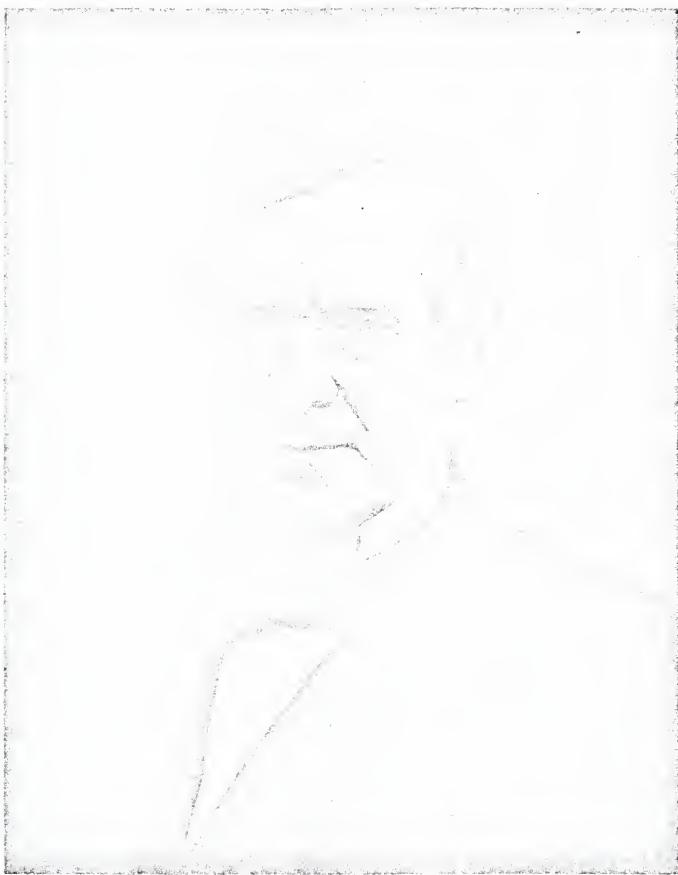
sublimity anywhere that was not stored away in his wonderful memory.

Black had located at York after he had retired from the cabinet to practise his profession. I had charge of the draft made under the State laws in the fall of 1862, and after having made the adjustment of the quotas, ordered the draft in Codorus Township, York County, for a certain number of men. That township was almost solidly Democratic, there being but five Republican votes in it to several hundred Democratic. It was not surprising that no Republicans were drafted, as two of the five had volunteered and were credited to the township.

Quite a clamor was raised in the township about the alleged unfairness of the draft, as only Democrats had been drafted, and a committee of inflamed citizens called upon Judge Black and demanded that he should appear as counsel for them before me to have the alleged injustice corrected. Black came to Harrisburg one evening and at supper told me what his mission was, and that he desired to be heard on the subject. I told him that any time that suited him would be satisfactory to me—that night if he specially desired it, if time was pressing, or the next day at any hour that was convenient for himself. I said: "Of course, Judge, I will give you all the time you want, for there is no person whose speeches I so much enjoy, but you certainly know that I will decide against you, as you have no possible ground on which to claim relief." He stated that he expected that, but that it was business to discharge his duty.

After supper we went up to my room and drifted into conversation about old times when he was judge of the Chambersburg district, and about the war, until he finally noticed that the midnight hour had passed. He got up, put his hat on the back of his





*Jeremiah S. Black*



head, threw his overcoat over his arm, bade me good night, and got as far as the door, when he turned around to make some remark about what we had been discussing, and he unconsciously warmed up on the subject, slowly paced back to his chair, seated himself, and it was not until broad daylight that the conversation ended. He gave me the entire inner story of the action of the cabinet and the President during the troublous times after the secession movement began. He told me, what had not then been made public, that he had written Buchanan's answer to the South Carolina commissioners; that Buchanan had first written an answer and submitted it to the cabinet, and it was approved by all the members of the cabinet except Cass and Black. Cass resigned soon thereafter and Black took his place as Secretary of State.

Black said little or nothing during the cabinet session, but after it adjourned he went to the President privately and told him that, much as he loved the President, he must sever his relations with his administration if that answer was sent to the Southern commissioners. He told me that it was the only time he had ever seen Buchanan exhibit great emotion. He was silent for a long time, and finally rose up with his eyes dimmed with tears, handed the paper to Black and told him to rewrite it as he believed it should be. Black took the paper, rewrote it, and it was accepted by Buchanan without change. That act of Black saved Buchanan from adhering to his old-school ideas at a time when, had he done so, it would have been utterly fatal to his record. I may add here that after getting a little sleep and a light breakfast I looked around for Black to fix a time for his argument, and found that he had gone home, and I never heard anything more of the unlawfulness or irregularity of the Codorus draft.



Judge Black was Buchanan's most trusted and certainly most devoted friend after Buchanan's retirement. Black had been for ten years president judge in the district embracing Buchanan's native county of Franklin. He had been called to the bench by Governor Porter when quite a young man because of a very earnest contest between Judge Thomson, then president judge (father of the late President Frank Thomson, of the Pennsylvania Railroad), and Frederick Smith, a prominent member of the bar who had been speaker of the house. The contest became so animated that Porter solved the problem by appointing Black from Somerset, who was not personally known to the members of the Chambersburg bar, but his exceptional record made as president judge in that district had made him the youngest man nominated for supreme judge in 1851, and when he was elected he drew the short term and became at once chief justice. He was very popular with the people throughout his mountain counties, and was once prevented from going to Congress, when the Democrats had decided to nominate him without a contest, by the Whigs first entering the field and nominating his father as the Whig candidate. He was the trusted and confidential adviser of Buchanan until his death, and it is unfortunate that he did not give posterity the benefit of his great intellectual powers and ripe experience in dealing with public affairs.

He continued active in the practice of his profession until his death long after he had passed the patriarchal age. He was counsel for John C. Fremont in his serious Paris complications, and finally had him released from a criminal conviction that had taken place in the absence of the defendant, and he was counsel for the dissenting heirs of Commodore Vanderbilt, who had willed his vast estate almost



entirely to his son William, and obtained a very liberal adjustment.

Buchanan fully appreciated Black, and intended to give him the position that Black most earnestly desired, that of Supreme Judge of the United States, but he unfortunately delayed the nomination of Black until by the resignation of Southern Senators the administration had lost control of the Senate, and Black's nomination was not acted upon. If he had been called to the court of last resort he would have gone into history as one of the great jurists of the nation, and he would have been consistent in his loyalty to the government.

Buchanan lived until 1868, three years after the war had closed, and Cameron had just one year earlier entered upon his third term in the United States Senate, having defeated Curtin, Stevens, Grow, Moorehead and Forney in the race for senatorial honors. At the time of Buchanan's death he was very generally misunderstood throughout the North. Secession had begun under his administration; he had been the close friend of the men who causelessly precipitated secession, and in the inflamed passions of the time he was generally regarded as having been faithless to his trust, and not in hearty sympathy with the North. He knew how sadly he was misunderstood and spoke of it freely in private letters to his many friends, but he avoided all public demonstrations or discussions on the subject, because he believed the time had not come when he could present his own vindication to a disappointed public.

He wrote a small volume in which he justified his actions as President, and gave very important contributions to history, but he did not attempt to show his attitude in favor of maintaining the unity of the States even though it should be done at the point of



the bayonet. It was not until Curtis' "Life and Letters of Buchanan" were published some years after his death that Buchanan's consistent and earnest loyalty to the government during the Civil War was conclusively presented to the public, and he went to his grave profoundly respected by all who knew him, but harshly judged by many of his countrymen as a factor in creating fraternal conflict. It caused him profound grief to know that he was misjudged as faithless in the highest trust of the nation, when, as he well knew, he had been scrupulously conscientious in his devotion to the union of the States, and ready to accept his full share of all the sacrifices necessary to overthrow rebellion and preserve the great Republic of the world.



## XXVII.

## MANN AND CASSIDY.

Fremont's Defeat Brought Strange Political Conditions—He Revolutionized the Democratic States of New England and the West—Mann and Cassidy Lock Horns for the District Attorneyship in Philadelphia—The Battle Between Master Politicians—Cassidy Returned Elected—Mann Contests the Return in the Courts—After a Protracted Trial They Agree to Pool Their Issues and Have Two District Attorneys—They Go to Harrisburg and the Special Bill is Passed and Approved by Governor Pollock—Judge Thompson, Who Was Trying the Contested Election Case, Refused to Discontinue It, and After Trial Decided in Favor of Mann and Refused to Appoint Cassidy as the Additional District Attorney—Cassidy and Mann as Great Party Leaders.

JOHN C. FREMONT burst upon the political horizon in 1856 like a dazzlingly brilliant meteor. The campaign made for him was one of the most earnest in effort and surprising in results in the history of American politics. It permanently revolutionized the Democratic States of New England and most of the Democratic States of the West, and such an achievement under all ordinary circumstances would have made its leader the one man to continue in command of the battle until the new Republican party won its control of the nation.

Strange as it may seem, while the Republican party emerged from the defeat of 1856 with very general and steadily-growing confidence as to its ability to win in 1860, the name of Fremont was rarely spoken of as the Republican candidate for the next campaign. He was probably the strongest man that could have been nominated as the Republican candidate in 1856, as the new organization was composed of a mass of



independent free thinkers in politics, anything but homogeneous in all their political aims and convictions, and as Fremont was practically without a political record, and with a romantic career as an adventurer, he could be accepted by all the varied and conflicting elements which united in his support.

I supported him against Buchanan, for whom I cherished the highest personal regard, and whose statesmanship commanded the respect of friend and foe, solely because of the aggressive pro-slavery platform on which Buchanan stood in the contest, but I now regard it as fortunate for the country that Fremont was not successful. I met him but once during the campaign when, with some half dozen of his supporters in New York, I called upon him by appointment at his home. He impressed me more favorably than I expected, but I did not then know that he was under the most positive orders from such leaders as the elder Francis P. Blair and Thurlow Weed, who had nominated him, not to make any public utterance on politics either orally or by letter during the campaign. He was courteous, dignified and severely discreet, and all his visitors left him with very favorable impressions as to his personal qualities.

I knew him much better later in life, not only during the war, but I met him often after the war when he was engaged in his various speculative bubbles which finally led to his criminal conviction in Paris when he was not present at court nor even in France. Through the wise legal services of ex-Attorney General Black he was rescued from the extraordinary French conviction, but he died without ever having achieved substantial success either as a military commander or a promoter.

A runaway marriage made Jessie Benton, daughter



of Senator Benton, of Missouri, his wife, and she was a woman of great intellectual force and unusual accomplishments. She survived him many years, and I last saw her when in Los Angeles several years ago, and only a year before her death. She was in feeble health, unable to rise from her chair, but her face seemed to brighten when I informed her that I had called to pay my respects as one who had earnestly supported her husband for President. Her means were very limited, but kind friends saw that her home had every needed comfort.

Had Fremont been elected President in 1856 the secession tidal wave would have been quite as sudden and powerful as it was after the election of Lincoln, and very likely there would have been less restraint upon the South. Lincoln's few utterances after his election all tended to tranquilize the South, and no word ever escaped from him that could quicken sectional passion. He was always conservative and finally saved the Republic by patiently waiting in fretful silence until the Confederacy committed the suicidal act of firing upon the starving garrison of Sumter. There is little doubt that Fremont, if he had been elected President, would have met secession with aggressive and defiant utterances, and it is doubtful whether he would have been restrained after his election as he was during the campaign.

The reason for this belief is found in his record after the war began. He was abroad when Sumter was fired upon, but he was suddenly recalled and commissioned as a major general of the regular army. The younger Francis P. Blair had been elected to Congress from St. Louis, the first Republican ever elected from a Southern State, and as Missouri was one of the most disturbed of the border States, Congressman Blair insisted that General Fremont should



be assigned to the command of Missouri, believing that he and the General could very heartily co-operate, and that Fremont would welcome his counsels; but as soon as he was safely installed in his new command, Fremont assumed autocratic authority, discarded the counsels of his best friends, proclaimed the emancipation of slaves in Missouri without even consulting the President, and generally became so impracticable and unmanageable that Congressman Blair was compelled to demand his removal.

Lincoln felt great delicacy in striking down at the beginning of the war the man who had led the Republican party in its first great battle, and he sent General Cameron, then Secretary of War, to Missouri to make a personal investigation of the situation, and on Cameron's report General Fremont was relieved of his command. He was very importunate for active military service, and in 1862 Lincoln assigned him to the command covering the valley and mountains of Virginia, but he was compelled to make a separate department for him, as Fremont would not serve under McDowell or Pope, who were his juniors. The only result of that campaign was Fremont's defeat by Jackson, when three armies were converging upon him. With wonderful celerity of movement and equal celerity of battle, Jackson struck the three commands in detail including Fremont, defeated all of them and came out with a great victory, when he should have been not only defeated but captured.

That was the end of Fremont's military career, and his military and business record sadly eclipsed his brilliant achievement as a Presidential candidate in 1856. Lincoln well understood that a large majority of the North, embracing all of the Democrats and many Republicans, would not sustain him in precipitating fraternal war. Fremont would not have taken





William B. Mann



pause as Lincoln did, but would doubtless have precipitated war when the North was entirely unprepared to support it. The suicidal act of war committed by the Confederacy in firing upon Sumter would in all probability have been performed in some way by Fremont, and it is impossible to calculate the terrible and far-reaching evils which would have resulted in a conflict thus forced upon the South.

The Presidential campaign of 1856 left all of the three leading parties in the contest clouded with uncertainty. Although the Democrats were successful in the election of the President and Congress, they were largely in the minority of the popular vote, and saw no prospect of maintaining Democratic supremacy save by recovering a number of the Democratic States which had taken their position in the Republican column.

The Know Nothings, then known as Americans, were given an important veneering of respectability by Fillmore, their candidate for President, who commanded the solid opposition vote of the South, and carried the electoral vote of the State of Maryland. Their leaders, especially in the North, were largely composed of political adventurers. They were widely estranged from the Republicans; they felt that they held the balance of power, and they were autocratic in their demands, while the Republicans, confident that they could win under their own banner in the near future, felt no inclination to conciliate the arrogant leadership of the Americans.

Fillmore and his immediate surroundings knew how utterly hopeless his canvass was, and they were much more embittered against the Republicans than against Buchanan, although for the sake of local advantages they had fused with the Republicans in Pennsylvania, but fusion failed of success, and with



the Pennsylvania Americans exhibiting entire lack of sympathy with the Republicans, it soon became evident in this State that the only way to attain Republican success was to cut loose from the Know Nothings, unfurl a distinctive Republican flag, and accept defeat simply to show the poverty of Know Nothing power.

In Philadelphia the Know Nothings as a body co-operated with the Republicans in local affairs, although many of the Know Nothing leaders were very reluctant in the movement, and some openly opposed the combination. It was this combination in Philadelphia that brought out a most interesting political episode as an aftermath of the Presidential battle of 1856, in which two men were brought prominently before the State for twenty-five years thereafter, and were very important factors in their respective parties. These men were William B. Mann and Lewis C. Cassidy.

Mann had been assistant district attorney under William B. Reed for some years, and when Reed left the party and joined the Buchanan forces in 1856, Mann was the logical candidate to succeed him. He was nominated by the combined opposition, embracing the Whigs, Republicans and Know Nothings, and Cassidy was nominated as his competitor.

They were then comparatively young men, and each confessedly stood as the best equipped leader of his party. They were both eminent in their profession, thoroughly trained in local politics, and tireless in their political efforts. It is needless to say that two such men, both on the sunny side of middle life, both adroit and accomplished campaign orators, and both familiar with the minutest details of all political methods known in city polities, would make a rattling campaign, and even eclipse the Presi-



dential contest in Philadelphia, and it is fair to assume that no known method of political advancement was left unemployed by either to win victory. The Democrats had control of the city, and although the Know Nothing organization had taken from the Democracy a large percentage of its men trained in the pollution of the ballot, the opportunity for fraud was largely on the side of the Democrats. Cassidy was returned as elected and Mann contested on the ground of fraud.

The case was tried before Judge Oswald Thompson, a man unusually equipped in all the best qualities of a judge, and inflexibly honest in all his judicial actions. A contested election covering a great city was a huge undertaking and the contest dragged along for weeks and weeks with Mann and Cassidy daily struggling for the advantage. Both finally became discouraged, as neither could see the end of the conflict. They were men trained in the same political methods, and it was not unnatural therefore that when they grew disgusted and weary of the daily contests they should come together and decide to pool their issues. They formed a compact that they should both go before the Legislature at Harrisburg and ask for the enactment of a special law authorizing two district attorneys to serve in Philadelphia during the present term.

I was at Harrisburg when they arrived there, and was present in Governor Pollock's room when they presented their proposition. They both admitted that the contest was doubtful and that it would require months and the expenditure of many thousands of dollars to make an exhaustive trial of the case. As Cassidy, the incumbent of the office, was entirely willing, and as Mann, who was conducting the contest, was entirely willing, the Governor and the Legislature accepted their views and the bill was



promptly passed and approved. They did not doubt that when they appeared in court and presented a certified copy of the act of the Legislature, and asked for a dismissal of the contest and the appointment of the additional district attorney by the court as the law authorized, Judge Thompson would willingly end the case and appoint Mann as the second district attorney.

To their utter surprise and terrible discomfiture Judge Thompson reminded the parties that it was not their suit at all, and that they had no control over it; that certain citizens of Philadelphia had petitioned the court, alleging that great frauds had been committed in the pollution of the ballot, and it was the cause of the public, not of the individual candidates, and therefore the case must proceed to final judgment.

With a sternly honest judge, and the developments already made in the case, Cassidy regarded his chances for retaining the office as rather remote, and he did not thereafter maintain his side of the case with the interest and effort previously exhibited. The case was thus hastened to final judgment by Cassidy permitting Mann to strengthen his side without serious rebuttal, believing that Mann would be declared elected, and that Cassidy would then be appointed as the additional district attorney.

Judge Thompson gave the case very thorough investigation, and, in an opinion that was unanswerable, declared Mann to be the lawfully elected candidate and he was at once qualified. His first act was to move for the appointment of an additional district attorney, and suggested that the court should give the position to Cassidy, but Judge Thompson again astounded both of them by declaring that he could not, consistently with his duty to public justice,



appoint a man to a position who had held it fraudulently and been judicially deposed, whereupon he appointed Mr. Loughead, a reputable member of the bar who was untrained in the politics of Mann and Cassidy. It was a great disappointment to both of them, but they were without remedy and had to accept the command without complaint.

This contest brought Mann and Cassidy into closest personal relations, and for a quarter of a century thereafter Cassidy was the acknowledged leader of the Democrats in the city, and Mann the acknowledged leader of the Republicans, but there never was a time when either could aid the other personally that it was not done with great fidelity. They would lock horns as opposing leaders in general political battles, and lead as only two such able, aggressive and experienced men could lead, but when either needed the help of the other the draft was always honored at sight.

Cassidy left the office of district attorney only to be by the side of Mann, the public prosecutor, in the defense of nearly every important criminal case, and it is an open secret that many criminal cases were finally disposed of as Mann and Cassidy mutually believed to be best, regardless of their efforts at the bar of the court. Both were generous to a fault, and accepted heavy exactions in the interest of their respective parties, which forbade fortune to either, and the bond of personal sympathy between them lasted throughout their lives. In 1874, when Mann was beaten for district attorney by Furman Shepherd, it was a defeat that clearly proclaimed the dominating power of Mann to be ended, and he was made prothonotary of the common pleas courts by a single Democratic vote that could have been obtained only by the friendly efforts of Cassidy.



## Old Time Notes

Mann became practically the district attorney at the end of the contest of 1853, as his associate was not known as a political leader, and for many years thereafter no man ever exercised more absolute power in the Republican party in the city than that exercised by Mann. He was re-elected in 1859, again in 1862, again in 1865, and was renominated in 1868, but a bolting convention nominated Isaac Hazlehurst, and finally both withdrew to give the field to Charles Gibbons, who was defeated by Furman Shepherd. In 1871 Mann was again nominated and elected, and in 1874 he was again made the candidate of the party, but suffered defeat, practically retiring him as a political leader.

I well remember in 1860 when Curtin's friends had decided to make him the candidate for Governor, I was one of the number who had several conferences with District Attorney Mann. He wanted to be entirely satisfied that it was the best nomination that could be made, and that he would be regarded as heartily in accord with the administration. After considering the matter carefully he announced to us that Curtin could depend upon a practically solid delegation from the city in favor of his nomination. It was not necessary to consult any other person. What he promised was performed.

His omnipotence was never questioned until 1868, when an organized opposition in the convention bolted from his nomination and nominated Isaac Hazlehurst, who had been the Know Nothing candidate for Governor in 1857. Mann could not understand that his defeat was inevitable. The fact that the party was split, and that a candidate of the highest character within his own household was pitted against him, convinced his friends that he could not escape defeat, but he was deaf to all appeals for his retirement.



He then lived on a large farm in the suburbs, and for a month or more he remained at home waiting, as he believed, for the tempest to subside. Finally it became necessary for the party to take action, and after consultation, William H. Kemble and myself were assigned the task of making him a visit at his home and obtaining his declination. We went out in the afternoon, dined with him, and met with a very hospitable reception generally, but he at first refused to entertain the question of his retirement. We were both warmly attached to him, and he had entire confidence in the sincerity of our friendship, and after persisting in our appeals to him until near the midnight hour, he finally yielded.

I well remember him throwing up his hands and saying, "This is to be the end of my political career." We told him that by yielding at that time he could reasonably expect to be re-elected three years thereafter, as he was, but he had then little hope that he had any future political career. I wrote a brief letter of declination, putting it entirely upon the ground of harmonizing the party, which he copied and signed, and we returned with it to the city the following day.

Although forced from the field, his power over the party was well maintained until after his final defeat in 1874, and I know of no man who served so many and received so little return from them. All who knew him could well overlook his faults because of common frailty, while they could not but cherish grateful memories of the many generous and philanthropic acts of his life. He continued as prothonotary of the courts until he had rounded out fourscore years, when he passed away with his memory green in the hearts of a multitude of friends.

Cassidy was also the ruler of his party for many years, but his rule was much more tempestuous than



that of Mann. His party was almost always rent by factional divisions which now and then would unhorse him for a time, but his leadership was so great, his championship of the party so grand, that none could supplant him in his mastery. I have seen him in Democratic State conventions when the war of factions was so bitter that the pistol and the dagger were held convenient for use, but even in the bitterest quarrels he was always victor.

He served one term as attorney general under Governor Pattison, and he made a record not only for legal ability, but for fidelity to his public trust that has been equaled by few who have held that high position in the State. Unlike Mann, he fell in the race before the infirmities of age and the ever-changing conditions of politics relegated him from political command, and when Lewis C. Cassidy crossed the dark river the Democrats of Philadelphia lost the ablest champion who ever held their colors in the front of battle.



## XXVIII.

## PACKER AND WILMOT.

William F. Packer a Strong Candidate of His Party for Governor—David Wilmot, an Advanced Republican, Nominated by the Union State Convention to Force Lingering Know Nothingism out of Political Power—They Nominate Hazlehurst for Governor—The Way Cleared for Future Battles against the Democrats—Wilmot's Great Ability as a Campaigner.

AREACTION that sometimes reaches a general revulsion usually follows a severely contested National political battle. The defeated party, after having strained its resources to the uttermost to achieve success, as did the Republicans in 1856, retires from defeat with the inclination to rest for a season. This condition is common, if not universal, in this country. The year following the Presidential contest is what is called an "off year" and cannot in any material way affect National issues.

The Republican and American parties, which summed up the opposition to the Democrats in 1856, were not in accord on National questions as a rule. The National leaders of the American organization, including Mr. Fillmore himself, were more aggressively hostile to the Republicans than they were to the Democrats, and while the Republicans polled half a million more votes than the Americans, although the vote was confined to a single section, the Americans claimed that theirs was the only party with a National existence and that it must be the ruling party of the opposition in order to maintain its organization alike in the North and South.

These two parties had pooled in Pennsylvania in a



union convention that nominated a State ticket, but in no other State was such a union accomplished, and the bitterness of the leading Americans in their opposition to Republicanism was speedily diffused throughout the American leadership in Pennsylvania. The Republican leaders were confident that the American organization must have, at the most, a very short existence and that the future success of the party depended upon unfurling the Republican flag and standing squarely under it even in the face of temporary defeat.

A Governor, two judges of the supreme court and a canal commissioner were to be elected in 1857, and there was little reason to hope for the success of the Union State ticket; however carefully selected to harmonize the party. The Union ticket had been defeated the year before when there was much closer sympathy between the two opposition organizations than then existed, and the sentiment of the Republican leaders was very general that while they should call a union convention which they could not fail to largely dominate, and make a fair division of the nominations between the two elements, the head of the ticket and the platform of the convention should emphasize in unmistakable terms the purpose of the Republican party to maintain its distinctive organization, with the hope of winning control of the nation in 1860.

The Democrats made their nominations early in the year, and chose William E. Packer for Governor, Judges Thompson and Strong for the supreme bench, and Mr. Strickland for canal commissioner. Packer was a strong candidate, and one of the most sagacious politicians of the State. He was brought into prominence when quite a young man by the favor of Governor Porter, who appointed him auditor general, where



he proved to be not only a very efficient officer, but developed into an important political leader. He was trained in the best political school of those days by his experience as the editor of the Democratic organ of Lycoming County, and a few years after his retirement from the auditor general's office he was nominated for the Legislature in the district embracing Lycoming, Clinton and Potter counties, and defeated by twelve majority.

His successful competitor served without contest during the entire session, but during the next summer Packer was making a tour of the district, and he was led to examine the official returns in Clinton County, when he discovered that his competitor had been returned elected by a mistake in addition, and that he had really been the successful candidate by a larger majority than that conceded to his opponent. There was no dispute as to the fact, for the error was visible on the official record. He published an address to the people showing the error, and was re-elected that year by a decided majority.

He was a man of unusually fine address, delightfully genial in social intercourse, and was thoroughly up in politics and parliamentary practice. He was made speaker of the house, and I well remember that it was conceded, alike by political friends and foes, that no better equipped presiding officer ever filled the speaker's chair.

While Packer was not classed as lacking in devotion to President Buchanan, who had just entered upon his high official trust, he was not the man that Buchanan would have chosen. He was the favorite candidate of Colonel Forney, who was then gradually severing his intimate relations with the President, and as the campaign progressed, and the Kansas-Nebraska issue became vital by President Buchanan indorsing the

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